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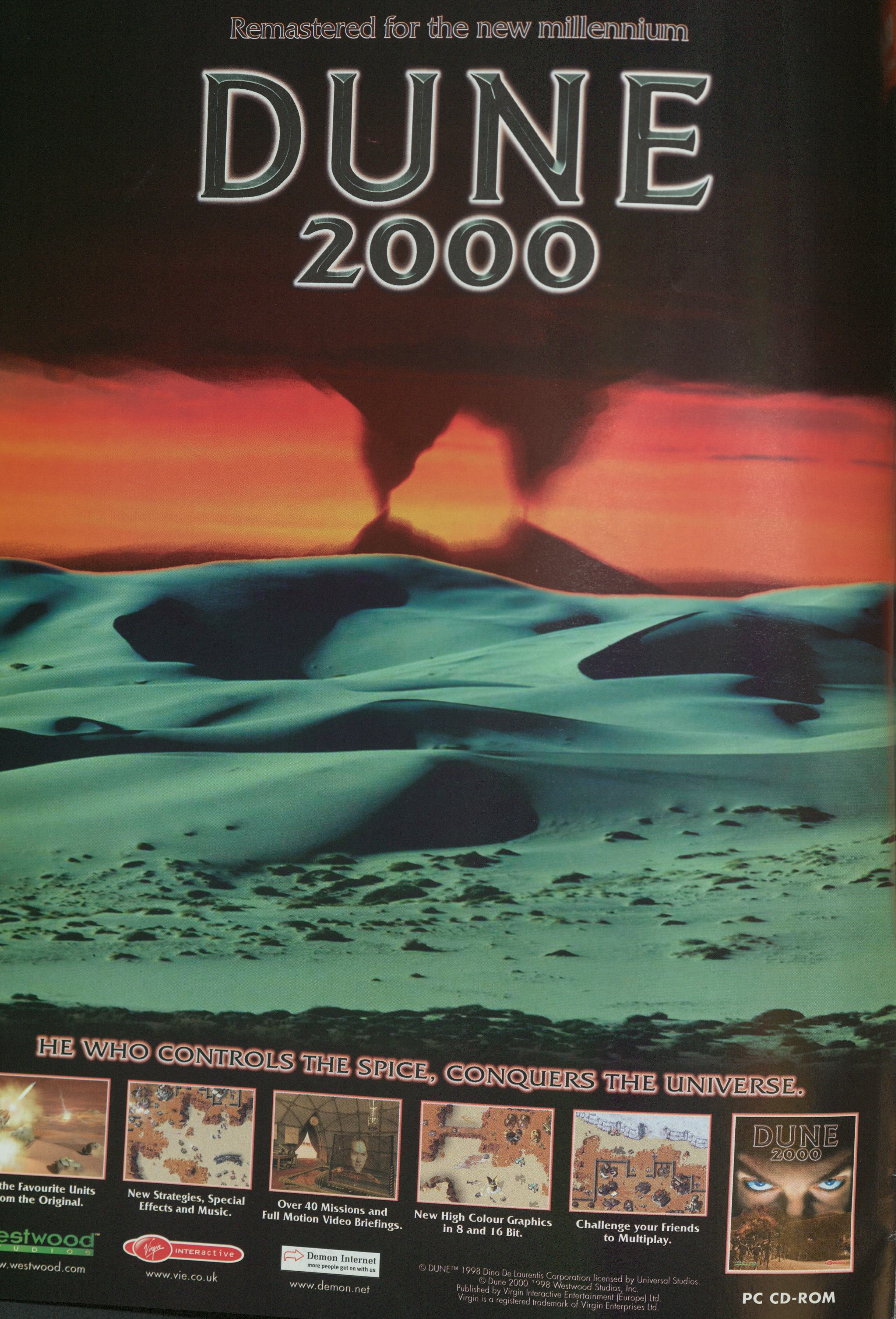

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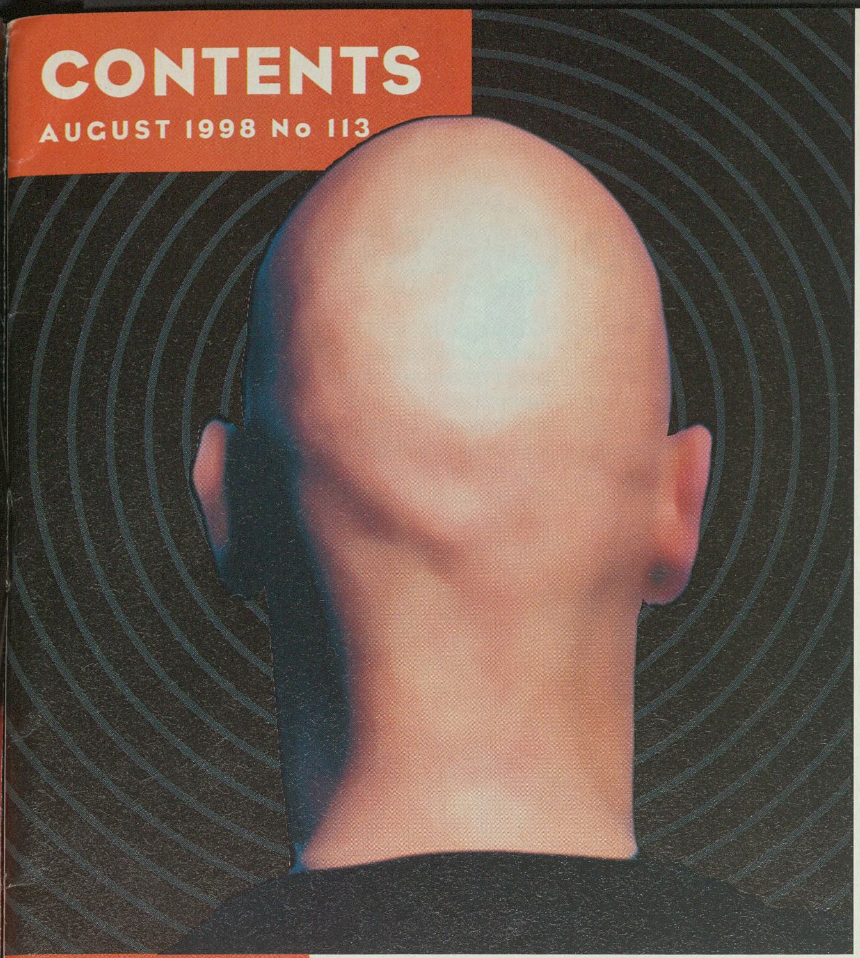

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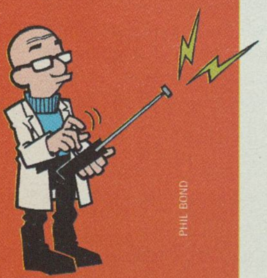

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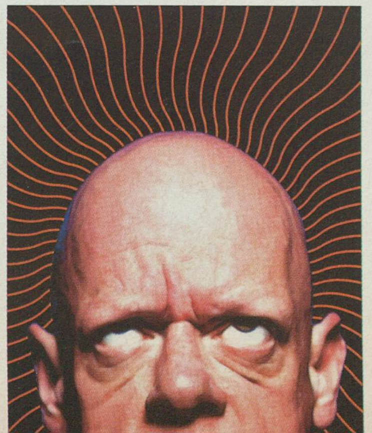

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EDITORIAL
AUGUST 1998 No 113

DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS

There seems to be a greater need for true fortean scepticism than ever before in our 25-year history. As more people believe in alien abductions, reincarnation and miracles, etc (so each new poll tells us), and more unscrupulous writers and 'media personalities' step forward, eager to exploit this credulity, we understand the fear of the 'skeptics' that society is drowning in lies, fraud and nonsense.

We have been accused of becoming more and more sceptical ourselves but a glance at past issues reveals some notable narrative or subjective articles. If these are few and far between, it is not due to a shift in our editorial policy or that we are part of a conspiracy to suppress a topic or spread disinformation. We are only too happy to consider a belief-oriented or subjective article as long as it is well written, well argued, well referenced and factually sound, and the author is prepared to discuss criticism of the issues or data involved. The fact is that most submissions we see, while undoubtedly interesting, fail on many of these counts.

CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS™

It is a mistake to equate questioning with 'disbelief'. As forteans, it is not our task to bolster belief but (in a passive form) to doubt and (in an active form) to question in order to ascertain what is reliable. To do this effectively we try to bring you all sides of an argument, if not in the same issue, then over a period of time.

On page 34 you'll find Sid Que's investigation into the world of the 'Wavies', people who believe they are under attack by microwave 'mind control' technology. The division of interpretation could not be wider: the authorities say the self-proclaimed 'victims' have histories of mental illness and dismiss their tales as paranoid delusions; the Wavies claim that they are selected because they are 'vulnerable' and the persecution is designed for 'plausible deniability'.

Sid Que presents the case from the victims' point of view and, it has to be said, there is substantial evidence of the abuse of power by corrupt, immoral or simply careless authorities. In the first week of June, alone, two reports underlined this view. First, a joint report by CNN and *Time Magazine* on 'Operation Tailwind' accused the CIA and the Nixon presidency of using Sarin nerve gas against defectors in Vietnam. Impressive sources were named, including a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee. On the same day, an AP report revealed that for 20 years inmates of Holmesburg Prison in Philadelphia were tested with experimental compounds, including cosmetics, dioxin, radioactive isotopes and psychological warfare agents. A five-year study by prison reformer Allen M Hornblum, of Temple University, found that secret testing on prisoners in the US was widespread from the end of World War II and was not fully prohibited until the early 1980s.

Such revelations lend credibility to the claims of victims of the grim mind control programmes like MKULTRA and too many others. Our interest is not only in the history of such projects and the mentality behind them, but also in the way they operated and the techniques they used. So far, we have learned of harassment, drugs, brainwashing, bombardment with microwaves and the implanting of electronic devices in brains. It is an uncomfortable analogue of the alien abduction scenario itself. Alternatively, the victims' accounts are often filled with experiences that, in another context, might be classed as religious visions (see page 26), unwanted encounters with strange phenomena or bizarre but well-known neurological functions such as synæsthesia (see Antonio Melechi's article on page 40.)

Paul Sieveking

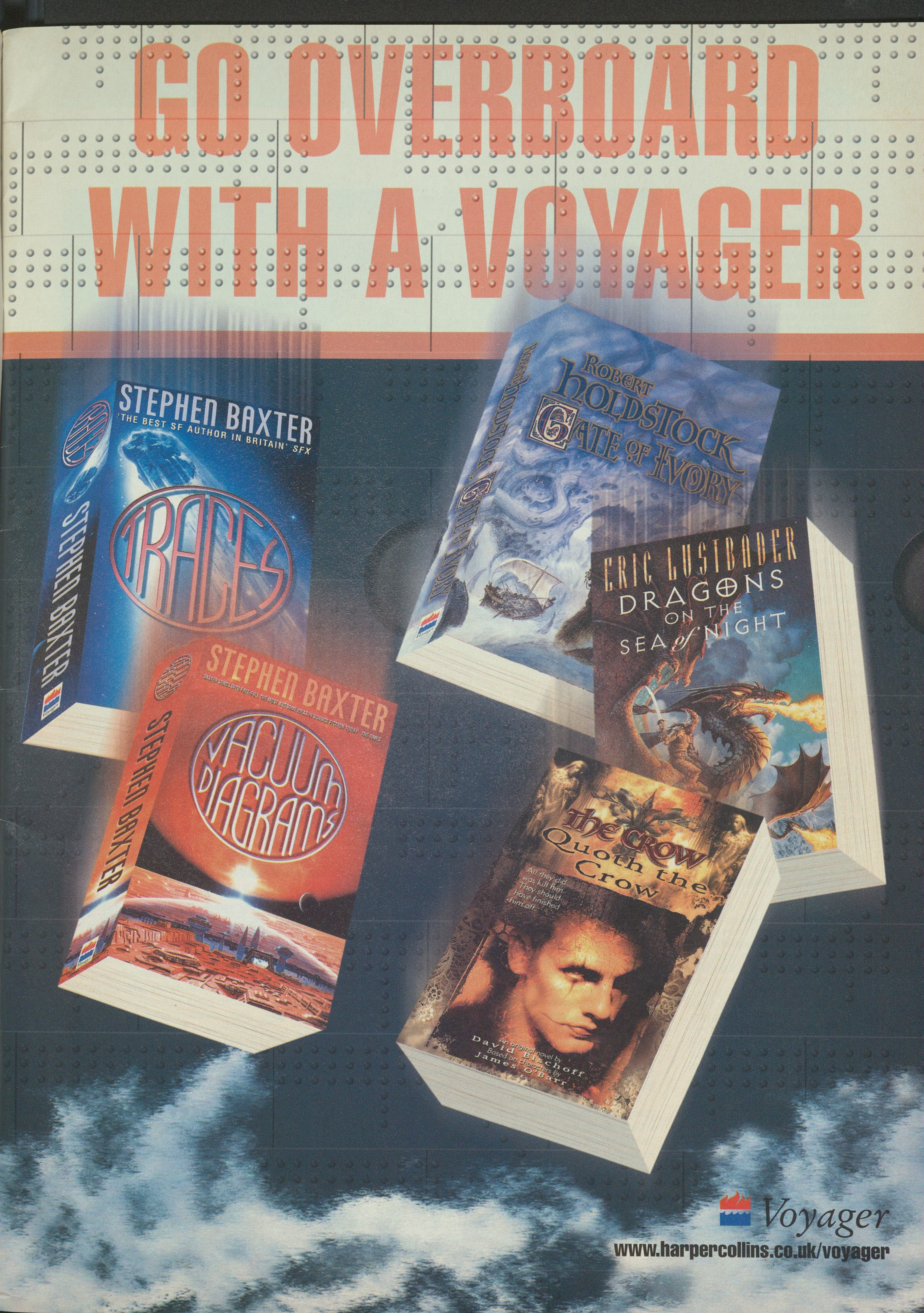
FEATURE WRITERS THIS ISSUE

JANET BORD
Janet Bord is the co-owner of the Fortean Picture Library along with her husband, Colin. She has previously written for *Fortean Times* on the authenticity (or otherwise) of UFO photographs and has also published a book on real-life encounters with the little people called *Faeries*.

SID QUE
Sid Que is a freelance journalist from the Washington D C area, specialising on shedding light on various urban legends and other fortean phenomana. He has written on such topics as mind-matter interaction, UFOs and electromagnetic healing. He wrote "Radio Head" after witnessing far too many microwave dishes in odd places while living in California.

JOE MCNALLY
Joe McNally is a 29-year-old Belfastman living in north London. As is often the case, he came to forteana via a youthful obsession with the likes of Charles Berlitz, but he's better now. He will watch anything with zombies and/or martial arts in it.

ANTONIO MELECHI
Currently researching states of drugged consciousness at the University of York,much of Antonio Melechi's work has investigated the history of drug experimentation and the effects of drugs on creativity and the imagination. He is the editor of two anthologies – *Psychedelia Britannica* and *Mindscapes* – and writes for a number of publications, including a regular column for *Entropy*. He is now working on an *Encyclopædia of Altered States*.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All they did was kill him. They should have finished him off.
An original novel by David Bischoff
Based on characters by James O'Barr

sidelines

DISTANT DRUMS: Cat Stevens, the singer now known as Yusuf Islam, converted in 1977 to an Islamic sect which views stringed instruments as displeasing to God. On his newly-released CD, he sings accompanied by a drum; other musicians on the CD use synthesisers, said to be even more repugnant to the sect than guitars. Oddly, the Taliban are so impressed by the singer's renunciation of music as ungodly that his is the only music allowed in Afghanistan. As Andrew Brown comments (*Church Times, 6 Mar 1998*): "This is a story which would be less confusing with fewer facts."

TEARS OF JOY: Last March, Roman Catholics flocked to a tiny church in Mura, near Barcelona in Spain, to pray before a porcelain statuette of the Virgin Mary said to have wept tears of blood for 10 days. The image had been taken to Spain from the Marian pilgrimage site of Medjugorje in Bosnia last year. It was then impounded by the Catholic authorities and taken to the city of Vic in the north-east so that experts could determine whether the bloody tears were miracle, misinterpretation or hoax. *[AP] 27 Mar 1998.*

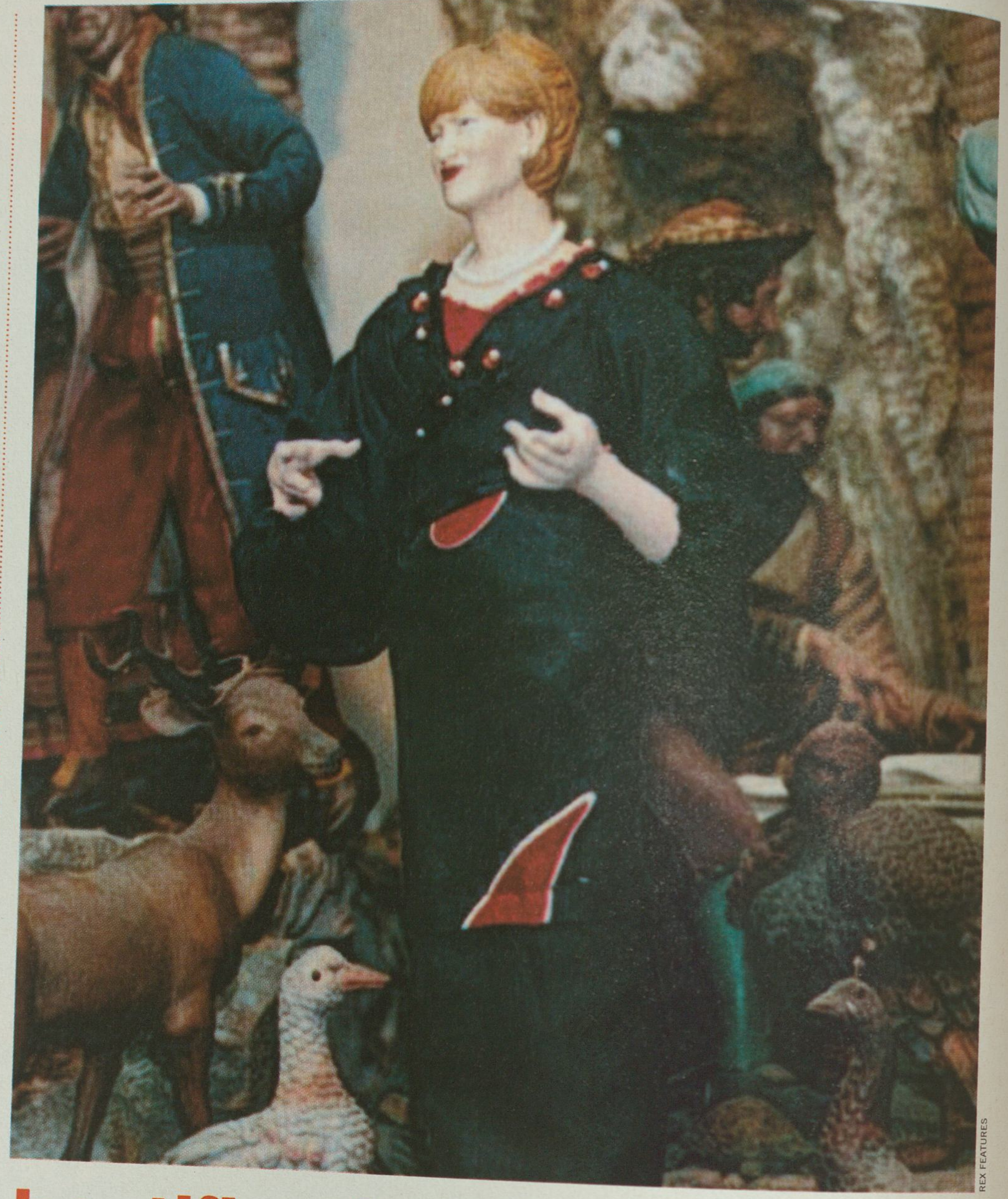
SACRED STATUE: About 10,000 pilgrims flocked to see a bleeding statue of Christ in Calcutta on 17 April. Lawyer Ajanta Chatterjee, 40, noticed the red stains when she went to clean her 18in (46cm) crucifix. "It is bleeding at all the points where Christ was nailed," she said. Hours later, a neighbour claimed to have seen trickles of blood on his statue of Christ as well. *Sun, 18 April; Hong Kong Standard, 20 April 1998.*

GRUMPY MAYBE?: Happy Stewart, 16, appeared at Falkirk Sheriff Court on 14 May and admitted assaulting a man, hitting a table with a broom handle and breaking crockery. She said she was "fed up" with being called Happy, a name that didn't suit her, and decided to change it to Elizabeth. She agreed to undergo anger management counselling and was fined £30. *D.Telegraph, 15 May 1998.*

A LIKELY STORY: A judge in Georgia, USA, dismissed a court case against John Fairytale, saying that anyone with a name like that had been punished enough already. *The Week, 16 May 1998.*

MIXED BLESSINGS: Thomas Lebepe, 41, a black South African farm labourer, was driving his cart home, pulled by two donkeys, one black and one white. The cart carried a sign saying: "The New South Africa". He was accosted and beaten up by a white farmer, who shouted: "Why do you have a white donkey and a kaffir one at the same time?" Mr Lebepe said he would continue to harness the two donkeys together. *[R] 4 May 1998.*

CROSSING THE FIELD: A middle aged physiotherapist had every one of her ribs broken when she was trampled by a herd of cows while walking her dog through a field in Bloxham, Oxfordshire. Helen Cowmeadow also suffered a broken collar bone and punctured lung, yet managed to stagger 600 yards (550m) to get help. *D.Mail, 10 April 1998.*



REX FEATURES

beatification of a princess

THE BEATIFICATION OF the late Princess of Wales continues apace, but the Neapolitans have been in the avant garde since last year. Many cribs set up by residents of Naples on the religious holiday of the Immaculate Conception (8 December) included a figure of the famous bulimic – 7in (18cm) and 12in (30cm) sizes available – alongside the more traditional characters.

"There have only been four or five other famous figures, apart from Biblical characters, who have ever been honoured in this way and the Princess is certainly the first foreigner," said Pasquale Pistone, a local academic. Figurines of Mother Teresa in her habitual uniform were also available for the first time, but she was viewed as a partner to the Princess rather than in her own right.

"These Christmas statues really reflect what the people think is good or evil at the present time," said Enrica Masserelli, from Naples. "Last year we had Umberto Bossi, head of the Northern [secessionist] League, being guillotined." *Guardian, 25 Nov; [AP] Sunday Telegraph, 7 Dec 1997.*

ACCORDING TO THE German newspaper *Bild*, claiming as its source the French Sunday newspaper *France Dimanche*, a gang of men with shovels invaded the island burial place of the Princess of Wales in Althorp Park to obtain the nameplate on the coffin lid for "a mysterious billionaire". The report – apparently picked up by at least one television station – said the billionaire had contacted the estate manager asking to be allowed to have the plate. His request was "indignantly rejected".

The grave robbers faced the problem that the grave was unmarked, and had to guess where to start digging. Just before midnight an estate guard saw a light among the trees on the island and alerted his colleagues. But when they got a boat and rowed to the island, they found no one there – just shovels and muddy footprints.

"There is absolutely no truth in this at all," said a spokeswoman for the Althorp estate in Northamptonshire. "We have been getting a stream of calls, mainly from journalists in Germany. We have no idea how this story originated. Nobody has dug anywhere up, and nobody has tried to. We aren't aware of any approaches from anyone wanting a name plate. No details have been given of such a plate, in any case." *PA News, 6 April 1998.*

THIS JUST IN

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HIDDEN MESSAGES

According to *The Bible Code* by Michael Drosnin (reviewed ***FT103:55***) hidden messages within the Hebrew Bible referred to World War II, the assassination of JFK and Yitzhak Rabin and many other recent events. Now three respected mathematicians – Maya Bar-Hillel, Dror Bar-Natan and Brendan McKay – have discovered that the code-breaking technique called Equal Letter Skip can be applied to any lengthy book with the same results. Their study was published in *Chance*, the periodical of the American Statistical Association. In a *Newsweek* interview, Drosnin had stated: "When my critics find a message about the assassination of a prime minister in *Moby Dick*, I'll believe them." Well, McKay found *Moby Dick* "predicted" the assassination of Mr Rabin, Martin Luther King and Leon Trotsky.

The original research by Eliyahu Rips and Doron Witzum – upon which Drosnin based his best-seller – found the names of famous rabbis using Equal Letter Skip on Genesis. For the new study, McKay and his colleagues took the names of rabbis and searched for them using ELS in a Hebrew translation of *War and Peace*. They found them.

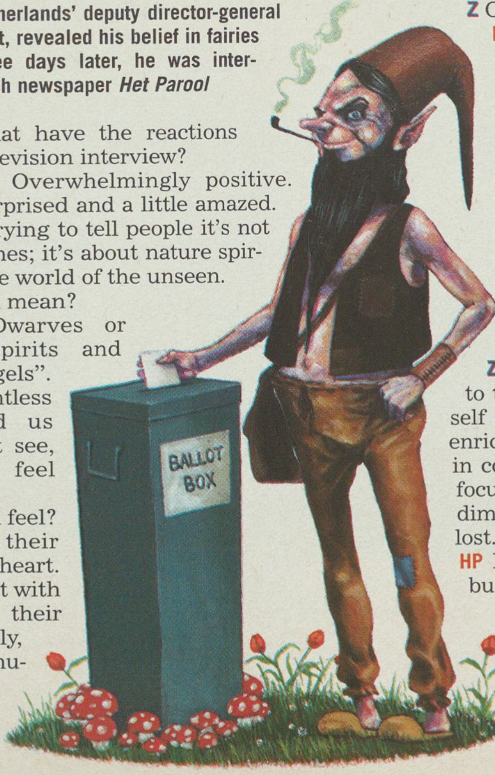
Back in 1928, in a satire on those who founded coded messages in Shakespeare's plays to reveal the true identity of the Bard, Monsignor Ronald Knox used Greek numerals and a lot of mathematics to prove that Queen Victoria wrote Tennison's *In Memoriam. Sunday Telegraph, 2 June 1997; Guardian, 2 June 1998.*

INTO THE UNKNOWN

Next October, a team of 35 Chinese scientists plans to explore the central section of Tibet's Yarlung Zangbo River Canyon, the world's largest canyon. Expedition leader Gao Deng-yi described the venture as "the major expedition of the 20th century". The canyon has an average depth of 16,500ft (5,000m) with a maximum of 17,657ft (5,382m), making it three times deeper than America's Grand Canyon. It is also 30 miles (50km) longer. It is formed on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau by a bend in the 1,279 mile (2058km) river, which empties into the Bay of Bengal and is known in India as the Brahmaputra. The canyon, remote even by Tibetan standards, remains one of the world's last unexplored areas. It wasn't until 1994 that Chinese scientists proved it was the deepest canyon in the world. *South China Morning Post, 17 May 1998.*

totally away with the fairies...

In a TV interview on 16 November 1997, Kees Zoeteman, the Netherlands' deputy director-general for the environment, revealed his belief in fairies and gnomes. Three days later, he was interviewed by the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*



ED TRAQUINO

HET PAROOL What have the reactions been to your television interview?

KEES ZOETEMAN Overwhelmingly positive. People were surprised and a little amazed. But I've been trying to tell people it's not just about gnomes; it's about nature spirits, it's about the world of the unseen.

HP What do you mean?

Z Gnomes. Dwarves or elves. Tree spirits and "landscape angels". There are countless beings around us that we cannot see, but we can feel them.

HP What do you feel?

Z I can feel their warmth in my heart. You can connect with them and feel their energy. Basically, you can communicate.

HP Do you ask questions if you are worried about something at work?

Z Of course.

HP What do these nature spirits look like?

Z Gnomes are a few decimetres tall. Elves are very small, a few centimetres. A landscape angel is metres tall. It's a glowing being of various colours and it uses energy to maintain nature's growth processes.

HP What does this mean to you?

Z It helps instil a feeling of respect and thanks for nature.

HP You're really sticking your neck out on this. People will say "Zoeteman is going crazy".

Z Yeah, but it is good to call attention to this side of reality. If you open yourself up to this world, it's not crazy – it's enriching. We live in this technical world, in concrete buildings where you have to focus your energy in order to endure. The dimension of the supernatural has been lost.

HP Did you know there is some talk of building a gnome theme park inspired by [the late Dutch artist] Rien Poorvliet?

Z Oh yeah? I didn't know that. Rien Poorvliet never saw a real gnome, but he was able to draw them quite beautifully.

[Harpers, Feb 1998.]

sidelines

STRIKE IT LUCKY: Luang Phor Khoon, Thailand's most popular Buddhist monk, has gained a wide following because people believe that if he hits them on the head with a rolled-up newspaper, they have a better chance of winning the state lottery. In April, another Thai monk stole the eggs of two boa constrictors, claiming that he could predict the winning lottery numbers from them, but police made him give them back. *Independent, 25 Mar + 28 April 1998.*

XINGZHI THE PEG: Zhang Xingzhi, a boy from Guangdong province in China, was born with three feet. He had the extra appendage removed in a five-hour operation with the help of Hong Kong specialists. We are reminded of a recent quotation from the *Fulham & Hammersmith Chronicle*: "There was an air of expectancy as I pruned myself in front of the mirror." *Hong Kong Standard, 26 Mar 1998.*

CHOC SHOCK: It has recently been pointed out that liquid chocolate has potential as a dynamic medium for shock absorbers. If the liquid is subjected to a high electric charge, it become much more viscous. Keith Gould, writing to *New Scientist* (*14 Feb 1998*), suggests that this might explain the apparently excessive consumption of chocolate in China.

TOILET PAPER: Gunnar Sundqvist, an employee of the Modo research laboratory in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, has managed to make a greyish-brown paper from elk turds. Elks eat bark and twigs and the cellulose is not broken down in their stomachs. The paper is frail and will not be mass produced, but will be a success with tourists, he believes (like elk turd earrings – see FT72:13). The product has a slight smell of bark. *Expressen (Sweden), 16 April 1998.*

FALLING AGAIN: Ionut Ilie, six, from Iasi in Romania, fell from the fourth floor of a block of flats and escaped with slight injuries. He had done the same thing at the age of one – falling from the first floor. We are not told how many floors the building has. *Evenimentul Zilei (Romania), 11 Mar 1998.*

A CLEAN SWEEP: A cleaner at a village hall in northern Romania faced charges of witchcraft after being caught burning candles and incense on a stone and cursing council leaders. The mayor sacked her and confiscated her broom. *[R] 7 May 1998.*

BUILDING A REPUTATION: More than 10,000 people a month have visited the World Brick Museum in Maizuru, Japan, to see 16 bricks from Scotland Yard, Covent Garden, the Royal Albert Hall, St Pancras Station and 221b Baker Street, fictional home of Sherlock Holmes.

Bricks and stones from the Anglican Cathedral and dockyard at Portsmouth, a city twinned with Maizuru, are to be added to the exhibition, and the Japanese are keen to acquire bricks from the house where Charles Dickens was born. It is hoped that the bricks will attract Japanese tourists to Portsmouth. *D.Telegraph, 5 May 1998.*

sidelines

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: Private detectives followed a man from Notton, South Yorkshire, for four years in an attempt to prove that an accident had not left him as severely injured as he claimed. They secretly filmed him leading an apparently normal life. Only when the film was sent to William Hood's solicitors did the detectives find out they had been following his neighbour, Peter Arnott, by mistake. Hood won his claim for damages and Arnott was considering suing for invasion of privacy. *D.Telegraph, 11 May 1998.*

MEET YOUR MAKER: Three former members of a polygamist church in Utah say they turned over £157,000 to the sect's leader in the belief that it was the only way to meet Jesus. Angered because no such meeting materialised, the trio is suing Jim Harmston, who heads The True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days, for taking advantage of their "deepest spiritual needs". *[PA] 10 April 1998.*

NO REST FOR THE WICKED: A Swedish nurse who had a different husband for every day of the week was jailed for a year in Stockholm for bigamy. Suzanna Borg, 30, found them through dating agencies and convinced all seven she had to do shift work for the other six days. She managed to maintain the deception for a whole year. *D.Mail, 4 April 1998.*

ROCK SOLID: A meteorite that fell to Earth in 1803 was bought by a private collector for £25,300 at Christie's in London – twice the expected price. A report on the stone, which fell at L'Aigle, France, helped reverse the view endorsed by the Académie Française that meteorites were imaginary. *Times, 9 April 1998.*

INTERSTELLAR TREASURE: A meteorite fragment from Mars sold at auction by Phillips for $4,600 (£2,900) – 1,600 times the value of its weight in gold and a world record price. Found in Brazil in 1958, it weighs about 100th of an ounce (0.3g) and measures 0.08in (2mm) by 0.16in (4mm). Gold trades at about £190 an ounce. *[R] 19 May 1998.*

CHOPPING SPREE: A mystery man who claimed to be working for the council took a chainsaw to an entire wood of 200 mature sycamores and alders along the A167 Great North Road outside Durham City – and then just left them lying there. Police were stumped for a motive. "Before he arrived there was an avenue of 15-year-old trees which had grown to a height of about 20ft (6m) with trunks about 10in (25cm) thick," said council spokesman Andrew Jackson. "Now there is nothing left." *Newcastle Journal, 7 April 1998.*

FRIENDLY FIRE: Philip Johnson of Kentucky was taken to hospital in February suffering from a gunshot wound to the left shoulder. Two years earlier, he was treated for an identical wound, telling doctors that he had "wanted to see what it felt like to be shot". The second wound was apparently also self-inflicted, because the first "felt so good he had to do it again". *Guardian, 5 Feb 1998.*

blind prejudice

ALEX HOWE

PARAPSYCHOLOGY, WIDELY DISMISSED as pseudoscience, makes far more use of rigorous experimental methods than other scientific disciplines, according to a study of the prevalence of "blind" methodology in research, published recently in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*.

Blind techniques were originally designed to stop investigators in clinical trials affecting the outcome of their experiments. Blinding prevents them knowing whether a patient has been given the drug or a placebo, and modifying their observations accordingly. However, it is seldom acknowledged that scientists in all disciplines face the temptation to tweak their data, whether deliberately or subconsciously.

The study, made by the biologist Rupert Sheldrake, analysed more than 1,000 papers in leading journals such as *Nature*, the *British Medical Journal*, the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Cell* and the *Journal of Applied Physics* over the period October 1996 to February 1997. In the physical sciences, no blind experiments were found among the 237 papers reviewed. In the biological sciences, there were seven blind experiments out of 914 (0.8%); in psychology and animal behaviour, seven out of 143 (4.9%); and in the medical sciences, six out of 122 (5.9%). By far the highest proportion (85.2%) was in parapsychology, published in such periodicals as the *Journal for the Society of Psychical Research* and the *Journal of Parapsychology*.

Dr Sheldrake found that physicists and chemists showed no signs of tightening up their methods. A survey of science departments at 11 British universities confirmed that blind procedures are rare in most branches of the physical and biological sciences. They are neither used nor taught in 22 out of 23 physics and chemistry departments, nor in 14 out of 16 biochemistry and molecular biology departments. By contrast, blind methodologies are practised and taught in four out of eight genetics departments and in six out of eight physiology departments. In most cases, they are used occasionally rather than routinely, and are mentioned only briefly in lectures. One chemist summed up his attitude to blind methods by saying: "Science is difficult enough as it is without making it even harder by not knowing what you are working on."

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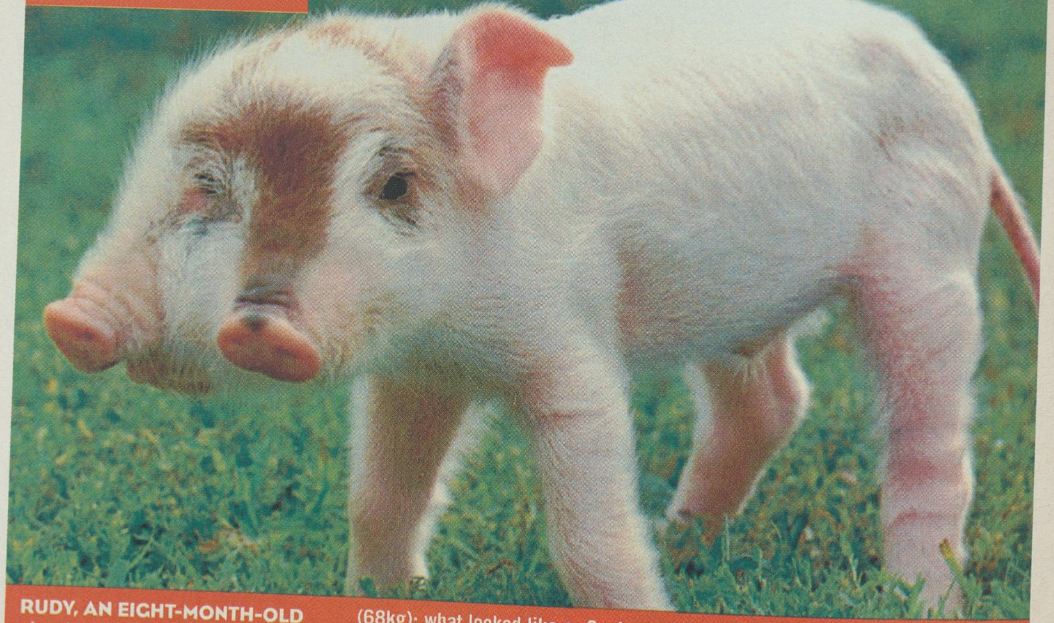
two-faced



AP

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bird watching

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN that the stressful life of the battery chicken can be relieved with a daily dose of television. Chicks that watch television grow quicker on less food, lay larger eggs more regularly and appear to be happier. Television taught them that novelty is not always dangerous and "made them more rounded and less self-conscious", according to Dr Bryan Jones, an animal behaviourist at the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh.

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Dr Clarke experimented with three screen-savers – an aquarium with animated fish, another in which toasters fly across the screen and a third in which string unravels. "They liked the flying toasters best," she said. "Maybe it's the tiny flapping wings on them." *D.Telegraph, 2 April 1998.*

PHOTO: NEWSFLASH SCOTLAND

sidelines

FLOWER OF THE ORIENT: China is claiming a new world first – the tulip. Most people believe that the tulip was a European flower, but new evidence shows it originated in China, according to the Xinhua news agency. *[R] 28 April 1998.*

JUST SEWER: A Vienna doctor is trying to find a home for her sister's 3,500 photographs of drain covers from all over the world. Hertha Bauer, a musician, left them to Jolantha Bauer in her will. *D.Telegraph, 18 April 1998.*

BOLT FROM THE BLUE: Christian pilgrims cried "Jesus is coming!" and "Miracle!" when lightning struck the 12th century Mosque of Omar next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on 16 April during an Orthodox pre-Easter feet-washing ceremony at the spot where many believe the Resurrection took place. Hundreds of pilgrims and tourists packed into the church courtyard were showered with stone fragments ripped from the mosque. Two worshippers were injured. *Times, 17 April 1998.*

TERMINAL ILLNESS: Quantities of anthrax bacteria have been discovered in the walls and ceilings of King's Cross Station in London; we are assured that though the spores are active, they are safely sealed and present no immediate health risk. Nineteenth-century builders probably used imported, and often infected, horse hair to bind the plaster mix. If the building is redeveloped as part of the Channel Tunnel rail link, there could be a risk to construction workers. *Observer, 5 April 1998.*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?: Last February, Adolph Lu Hitler was tipped to hold onto his seat in the elections held in Meghalaya, a state in north-eastern India, despite a strong challenge by Churchill Lyngdoh. A week later, Spanish police stepped up their hunt for a Peruvian highwayman called Hitler Escalante, whose gang rob tourists on the Costa Brava motorway near Barcelona. And on 4 March, Adolf Hitler Kwok Kin-wing lost his appeal against conviction of molesting a 17-year-old schoolgirl in Hong Kong. *D.Telegraph, 17 Feb; Mirror, 21 Feb; Independent, 5 Mar 1998.*

UNREASONABLE DEMANDS: Last April, Lorie Marling of Columbus, Ohio, received a demand from the IRS for $270 billion (£168 billion) in back taxes. They kindly offered to let her pay in $90 billion instalments. "My accountant thought I was being called on to pay off the national debt," she said. *[AP] 10 April 1998.*

FIGHTING SINGLE-HANDED: After being questioned by the FBI, Daniel Rudolph of South Carolina cut off his left hand with a circular saw on 9 March, filmed the amputation and sent the video to the FBI as a protest. They were searching the mountains of North Carolina for his brother Eric Robert Rudolph, a suspect in the bombing of an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, on 29 January. Surgeons struggled to re-attach the hand. *[R] Independent, 11 Mar; Newsweek, 23 Mar 1998.*

just don't hurt their felines

ROB DUNLOP

ON 7 JULY 1997, officers from the Department of Animal Regulation, wearing breathing masks, raided a house in the San Fernando Valley in suburban Los Angeles, California. Over the next nine hours, they retrieved 589 cats, most of them wild or untamed, from inside the house. Nine were dead, some stuffed in shopping bags and one beneath a sofa cushion, their bodies serving as food for the living. Many of the cats were emaciated, weakened by parasitic and viral infections. Walls, counter tops and floors were covered in fæces and urine. About 200 of the cats had to be put to sleep in the following days.

Doris Romeo, 60, rented the large house as the operator of a self-styled cat rescue mission, "Pets for Life", although she lived elsewhere. She was charged with felony animal abuse, although the charge was later dropped because of "evidentiary problems". Another woman, who worked for Romeo and *did* live in the house, sleeping in a bedroom filled with kittens and cats, wasn't charged. "I didn't know it had gotten out of hand," said Romeo in a telephone interview.

While the number of cats in the Romeo case might have set a record, the phenomenon known to animal welfare workers as "the collector syndrome" is quite common and becoming more so. The collector is defined loosely as someone who acquires many more animals than they can care for, like the man who kept 253 dairy goats in his house. Collectors often consider themselves saviours of animals no-one else wants.

The most common variety of collector is the "cat lady". On 8 October 1997, wheelchair-bound, 86-year-old Felista Soliman, was found living in a filthy house in Newark, New York, overrun by at least 100 cats. She had trouble eating because the animals would swarm all around her at meal time. The cats gradually accumulated after the widow's daughter moved in about five years earlier. Carol Soliman, 56, was charged with criminal abuse and animal cruelty.

The authorities found 12 dead cats in the house, which was littered wall-to-wall with fæces, rubbish and hundreds of empty catfood cans. Of 89 cats removed to animal shelters, at least a dozen were put to sleep because of poor health. Another dozen or more were still hiding in nooks of the house and were being rounded up the following day.

MANY OF THE CATS WERE EMACIATED, WEAKENED BY PARASITIC AND VIRAL INFECTIONS

The modest, three-bedroomed, garbage-strewn house of widow Vivian Parson in Tampa, Florida, was fumigated and demolished by mechanical digger in October 1997 after neighbours complained about the smell. Mrs Parson, 76, kept an estimated 1,200 rats and treated them like pets. She had lived in the house for 40 years. Her daughter, Vivian Bryant, 54, also lived in the house. "To be honest, we didn't notice the rats," she said. *[CNN] 8 July; [AP] 10 Oct 1997; Wilmington (DE) Sunday News Journal, 3 May 1998.*

TWO MORE HOUSES were revealed in March to be health problems because owners had allowed cat-breeding to get out of hand. Fifty-four cats were found in a house in a smart neighbourhood in Tarpon Springs, Florida, and 34 were found in an Edmonton, Alberta, house whose owner insisted: "There is no smell. The neighbours are simply neurotic." Meanwhile, authorities in Vietnam said they are being overrun with rats (despite having exterminated 55 million last year), blaming the problem on the number of cats being taken out of circulation as food delicacies bound for China. *St Petersburg (FL) Times, 28 Mar; Edmonton (Alberta) Journal, 5 Mar; [AP] 15 Mar 1998.*

witchcraft trials

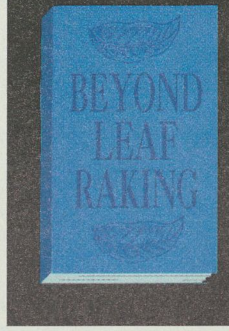
THE WITCH VILLAGES of northern Ghana have become the centre of a debate over how a modern government should deal with long-held superstitions. One such village is Gambaga, 30 miles (48km) from the nearest paved road, which offers refuge to more than 100 women accused of witchcraft. They live in a cluster of mud-walled compounds out on the edge of town. One young woman known as Banga is not sure exactly what she did to be sent there. All she knows is that a little boy died, she got the blame and her friends and relatives turned against her.

The witches of Gambaga live in abject poverty, forbidden from leaving without permission, but at least they are safe from violent retribution. "If I go back I would not survive," said a woman called Hawa. "The father of the baby I bewitched would hunt me down." Witchcraft is used to make sense of illness and misfortune. The accused are often elderly women, the weakest members of African village life; and the accuser frequently a jealous neighbour or another wife in a polygamous household. Most of the exiled women eventually come to believe they really are witches. *[AP] 5 Jan 1998.*

book 'em!

THE COMPETITION FOR Oddest Title of the Year, organised by *The Bookseller* magazine, was a bit disappointing last year. The winner was *The Joy of Sex: Pocket Edition*, followed by *The Prostate: A Guide for Men And The Women Who Love Them* and *Method For Calculating The Size Of Stone Needed For Closing End-Tipped Rubble Banks in Rivers.*

The other short-listed titles were: *Interpersonal Violence: The Practical Series*, *Beyond Leaf Raking*, *Attractive And Affectionate Grave Design*, *From Coherent Tunnelling to Relaxation* and *Collect Fungi On Stamps*. None of these matched up to previous winners, such as *How To Avoid Huge Ships* and *Greek Rural Postmen And Their Cancellation Numbers.* *D.Telegraph, 8 Nov 1997.*



Constable Jesus

NEWS INTERNATIONAL

A POLICEMAN WITH an apparent talent for rescuing people from the dead has been nicknamed 'Jesus' by colleagues. PC Stuart Janaway, 27, who is based at Wythenshawe, had previously trained as a priest. He has been called to at least 40 reports of sudden death, and in each case the victim has survived – including four occasions on which paramedics at the scene were convinced of death.

Nine months ago, he attended the scene of a shooting where a man was apparently dying of gunshot wounds to the stomach and chest. Janaway put his fingers on the bullet holes and the man survived. On other occasions he has come to the aid of elderly people, given up for dead, by massaging their hearts, and he has talked at least two attempted suicides out of killing themselves. *Times, Mirror, 13 April 1998.*

WIRED FOR WEIRD

This month, **JEFF KOYEN** picks more strange fruit from the online tree of knowledge.

PICKOVER'S REALM

Clifford Pickover is one of those 'pop-sci' guys who seems to know something interesting about everything. In a good way. Many *FT* readers will already know Pickover as the author of *The Alien IQ Test* and one of the Brain Boggler columnists for *Discover* magazine. His very personal website reveals a playfully complex thinker fascinated with science, art and philosophy.

http://sprott.physics.wisc.edu/pickover/home.htm

THE EUROPEAN VOYNICH MANUSCRIPT TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT HOME PAGE

As of yet, the *Voynich Manuscript* remains untranslated. What, exactly, is it? A Cathar prayer book? A remnant of 13th century's "Great Heresy"? Or, a baffling forgery? This site offers a comprehensive history of the book's possible origins, theories regarding its content and updates on translation projects, as well as a downloadable version of the Voynich font for properly viewing the transcription.

http://sunl.bham.ac.uk/G.Landini/evmt/evmt.htm

EDWARD GOREY

Edward Gorey's work is, unfortunately, of the category which one forgets about for long periods of time. Then, in bursts of renewed love, it is rediscovered. So, on with it, then! Start at this, the most comprehensive compilation of Gorey sites to be found. Includes links to complete online versions of his classics *The Beastly Baby*, *The Disrespectful Summons* and, naturally, *The Gashleycrumb Tinies.*

http://cll.ikp.uni-bonn.de/~hme/Gorey.html

TRY SOME PI?

While I'm not running out to buy David Blatner book, *The Joy of Pi*, I will recommend his compilation of pi-related subjects on the web. Notable are "Pi in the Bible" and, of course, pi's relationship to the pyramids.

http://www.joyofpi.com/pilinks.htm

Jeff Koyen lives in New York City (**jeff@nypress.com**) where, he maintains, something catastrophic is just bound to happen soon.

sidelines

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: Private detectives followed a man from Notton, South Yorkshire, for four years in an attempt to prove that an accident had not left him as severely injured as he claimed. They secretly filmed him leading an apparently normal life. Only when the film was sent to William Hood's solicitors did the detectives find out they had been following his neighbour, Peter Arnott, by mistake. Hood won his claim for damages and Arnott was considering suing for invasion of privacy. *D.Telegraph, 11 May 1998.*

MEET YOUR MAKER: Three former members of a polygamist church in Utah say they turned over £157,000 to the sect's leader in the belief that it was the only way to meet Jesus. Angered because no such meeting materialised, the trio is suing Jim Harmston, who heads The True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days, for taking advantage of their "deepest spiritual needs". *[PA] 10 April 1998.*

NO REST FOR THE WICKED: A Swedish nurse who had a different husband for every day of the week was jailed for a year in Stockholm for bigamy. Suzanna Borg, 30, found them through dating agencies and convinced all seven she had to do shift work for the other six days. She managed to maintain the deception for a whole year. *D.Mail, 4 April 1998.*

ROCK SOLID: A meteorite that fell to Earth in 1803 was bought by a private collector for £25,300 at Christie's in London – twice the expected price. A report on the stone, which fell at L'Aigle, France, helped reverse the view endorsed by the Académie Française that meteorites were imaginary. *Times, 9 April 1998.*

INTERSTELLAR TREASURE: A meteorite fragment from Mars sold at auction by Phillips for $4,600 (£2,900) – 1,600 times the value of its weight in gold and a world record price. Found in Brazil in 1958, it weighs about 100th of an ounce (0.3g) and measures 0.08in (2mm) by 0.16in (4mm). Gold trades at about £190 an ounce. *[R] 19 May 1998.*

CHOPPING SPREE: A mystery man who claimed to be working for the council took a chainsaw to an entire wood of 200 mature sycamores and alders along the A167 Great North Road outside Durham City – and then just left them lying there. Police were stumped for a motive. "Before he arrived there was an avenue of 15-year-old trees which had grown to a height of about 20ft (6m) with trunks about 10in (25cm) thick," said council spokesman Andrew Jackson. "Now there is nothing left." *Newcastle Journal, 7 April 1998.*

FRIENDLY FIRE: Philip Johnson of Kentucky was taken to hospital in February suffering from a gunshot wound to the left shoulder. Two years earlier, he was treated for an identical wound, telling doctors that he had "wanted to see what it felt like to be shot". The second wound was apparently also self-inflicted, because the first "felt so good he had to do it again". *Guardian, 5 Feb 1998.*

blind prejudice

ALEX HOWE

PARAPSYCHOLOGY, WIDELY DISMISSED as pseudoscience, makes far more use of rigorous experimental methods than other scientific disciplines, according to a study of the prevalence of "blind" methodology in research, published recently in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration.*

Blind techniques were originally designed to stop investigators in clinical trials affecting the outcome of their experiments. Blinding prevents them knowing whether a patient has been given the drug or a placebo, and modifying their observations accordingly. However, it is seldom acknowledged that scientists in all disciplines face the temptation to tweak their data, whether deliberately or subconsciously.

The study, made by the biologist Rupert Sheldrake, analysed more than 1,000 papers in leading journals such as *Nature*, the *British Medical Journal*, the*Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Cell* and the*Journal of Applied Physics* over the period October 1996 to February 1997. In the physical sciences, no blind experiments were found among the 237 papers reviewed. In the biological sciences, there were seven blind experiments out of 914 (0.8%); in psychology and animal behaviour, seven out of 143 (4.9%); and in the medical sciences, six out of 122 (5.9%). By far the highest proportion (85.2%) was in parapsychology, published in such periodicals as the *Journal for the Society of Psychical Research* and the *Journal of Parapsychology.*

Dr Sheldrake found that physicists and chemists showed no signs of tightening up their methods. A survey of science departments at 11 British universities confirmed that blind procedures are rare in most branches of the physical and biological sciences. They are neither used nor taught in 22 out of 23 physics and chemistry departments, nor in 14 out of 16 biochemistry and molecular biology departments. By contrast, blind methodologies are practised and taught in four out of eight genetics departments and in six out of eight physiology departments. In most cases, they are used occasionally rather than routinely, and are mentioned only briefly in lectures. One chemist summed up his attitude to blind methods by saying: "Science is difficult enough as it is without making it even harder by not knowing what you are working on."

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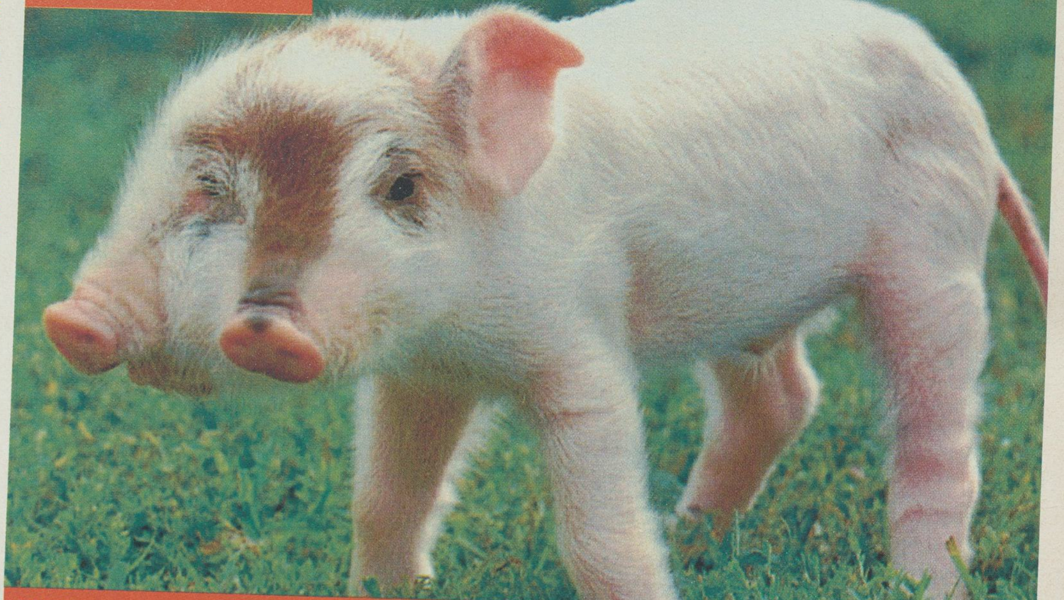
two-faced



AP

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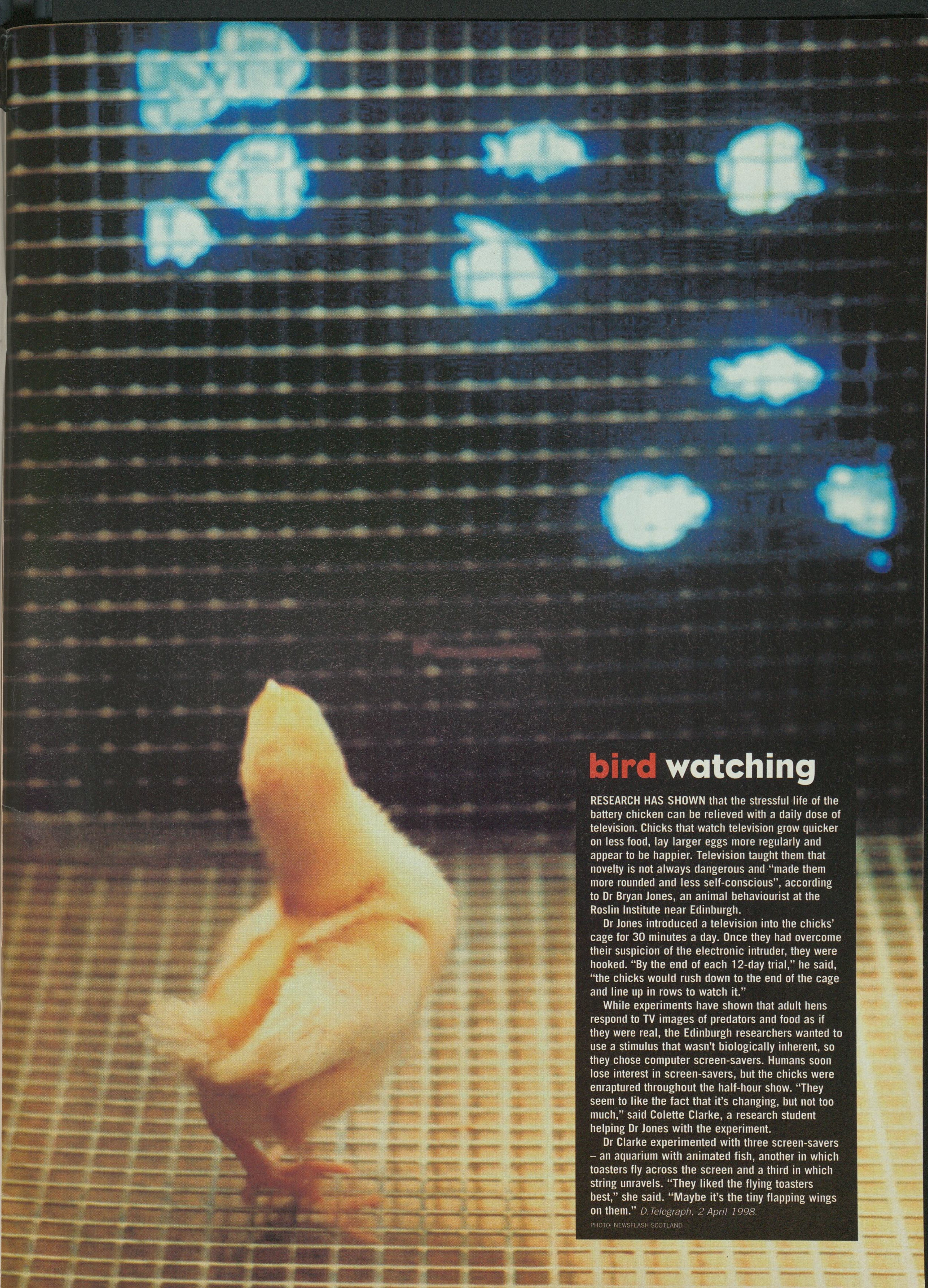

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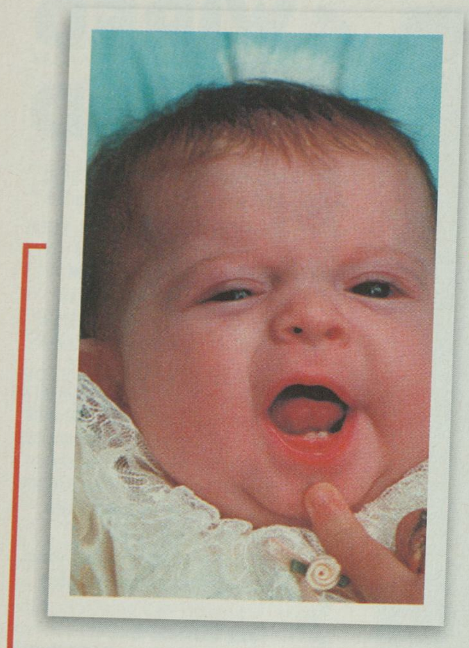
PHOTO: NEWSFLASH SCOTLAND

medical bag

Last issue we profiled some of the oldest people on the planet. This month Fortean Times takes a look at the other end of the spectrum and presents some multiple births and prodigious tots.



SOUTH WEST NEWS

MULTIPLE BIRTHS

Two sets of American quadruplets were born on succeeding days in April at the University hospital in Iowa City, the same hospital where septuplets, one of three sets known to have been born alive in recent times, were born to Bobbie and Kenny McCaughey last November. The McCaugheys, from Des Moines, turned down millions of dollars to sell their story, but settled in the end for a TV programme on which they aired their religious views.

Kimberley Grady and her husband Daniel's four daughters were delivered on 1 April, 14 weeks early. Ashley Irene weighed 1lb 15oz (879g); Lindsey Lucille, 1lb 12oz (794g); Kara Colleen, 1lb 11oz (765g); and Alyssa Anne, 1lb 9oz (709g). The following day, Mike and Jody Eastridge had one boy and three girls, born eight weeks early. Katie weighed 3lb 9oz (1.62kg); Emily, 4lb 2oz (1.87kg); Amanda, 4lb 3oz (1.90kg); and Chad, 5lb 6oz (2.44kg). The McCaughey septuplets and the Eastridge quads were conceived through *in vitro* fertilisation (like the ill-fated octuplets of Mandi Allwood in the UK), but the Grady quads were conceived without such treatment, a much rarer event. *Sunday Telegraph, 12 April 1998.*

Another set of surviving septuplets was born on 14 January to Hasna Mohammed Humair, a Saudi woman of 40 who already had six children. The four boys and three girls were delivered in the Abha obstetric hospital in Aseer, 750 miles (1,207km) south of Riyadh. The unplanned pregnancy occurred while the mother was taking a fertility drug to regulate her menstrual cycle and the babies were eight weeks premature. A month later, all seven were in good health and their weight increase had been between 2.5lb (1.13kg) and 3lb (1.36kg).

Although the initial news report quoted the father, Abdullah Mohammed Ali, a semi-retired taxi driver aged 55, as saying: "We're ecstatic and can't wait for them to join their brothers and sisters at home", on 1 March Hind Moussa, a pædiatrician at the hospital, threatened to call the police unless the parents took the seven-week-old babies home. The nursery was overcrowded and the staff were running out of patience. Mrs Humair asked for more time, pleading chronic fatigue.

Three months after their birth, the babies were still at the hospital. The couple had separated as the result of all the publicity, and Mrs Humair had been disowned by her own parents because local television showed a picture of her with her face unveiled. In mid-April, the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah donated 200,000 riyals (£32,000) to help the family cope. *[AP] 17+26 Jan, 18 Feb, 2 Mar; Sunday Telegraph, 19 April 1998.*

On February 28, Cristina Hernandez gave birth to three boys and three girls in Mexico City, three months before term. Doctors had earlier caused a sensation by announcing that Hernandez, 28, already a mother of a 10-year-old girl, was carrying up to nine fœtuses. The six babies were put in incubators, but were said to be in good health. It was not stated whether Hernandez had taken fertility drugs. *Times (Malta), 13 Feb; [R] 2 Mar 1998.*

The official record for multiple births remains nine. Nontuplets – five boys and four girls – were born to Geraldine Bridrick in Sydney on 13 June 1971; none survived beyond six days. Quindecaplets, the fœtuses of 10 girls and five boys, were reportedly aborted from the womb of a 35-year-old woman who was four months pregnant after fertility treatment, by Dr Gennaro Montanino in Rome in July 1971.

BORN WITH TEETH

When Alyshia Collier (pictured above) was born at Southmead Hospital in Bristol on 30 September 1997, she was found to have two teeth. "The midwives said they had never seen a baby born with teeth before – it is supposed to be very lucky," said Sally, the 21-year-old mother. "The doctors said her teeth would drop out and that she would get milk teeth at the right age, but they just get bigger and bigger. She even had a teething rattle for Christmas."

Ashley Sinclair was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1989 with two front teeth; and in June 1990, Sean Kenny was born in Basingstoke with 12 teeth, believed to be a world record. Three days later, doctors pulled the teeth to prevent possible feeding problems. Sean grew his second full set of teeth at 18 months. In October 1991, Beverley Carter's baby was born in Margam, south Wales, with five teeth; and in January 1993, dentist's daughter Charlotte Harris was born with two teeth at St James's Hospital in Leeds. Phillip Mejia was born with a single tooth in Racine, Wisconsin, on 7 March 1995; this was loose and got pulled two days later. In March 1996, Emma Louise Shepherd was born in Scotland with two teeth; these were also loose and were soon after removed.

Incisors normally appear at 5–8 months, molars at 24 months. In 1956 Robert Clinton was reported to have a molar tooth at one month by staff at Bellevue Hospital, New York City. These reports strengthen the view that such cases are in fact supernumerary dentitions rather than just the early eruption of milk teeth.

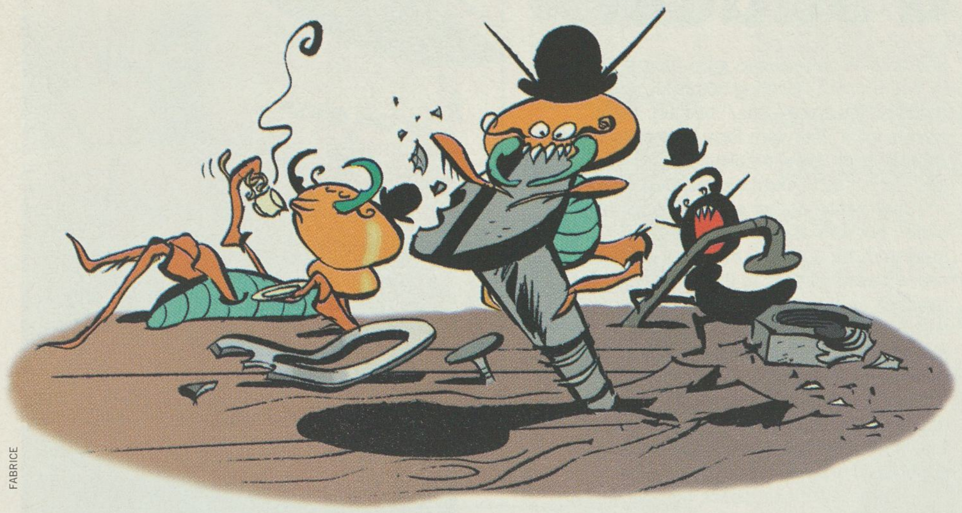
Some celebrated men are supposed to have been born with teeth. Louis XIV (1638–1715) was accredited with having two teeth at birth. Bigot, a physician and philosopher of the 16th century; Henry Boyd, the poet (d.1832); the 3rd century Roman emperor Valerian; and Richard III (1452–85) were all reputed to have had this anomaly. For reports of third dentition in old age, see ***FT48:64–70***. There exists only one record of fourth dentition: Lison's case published in 1896. *D.Star, 18 Oct 1991; D.Mirror, 3 Oct 1991, 11 Jan 1993; [AP] 9 Mar 1995; Ormskirk Advertiser, 21 Mar 1996; Bristol Eve. Post, 27 Dec; D.Telegraph, D.Mail, 29 Dec 1997; Gould & Pyle: 'Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine' (1896);* ***FT58:27***.

GIANT TOTS

Ethan Gilby was born in March after a 19-hour labour in Grimsby Maternity hospital. He weighed 12lb 4oz (5.56kg) – almost double the average – and within a year he grew to 32lb (14.52kg), with no signs of slowing down. The average weight at one year is 20lb (9kg). The infant Hercules was nearly 3ft (91cm) tall and had broader shoulders than his sister Naomi, four. His mother, Shellie Gilby, 22, of Cleethorpes, south Humberside, dressed him in clothes for three-year-olds. He was introduced to solid food at six weeks and his favourite meal is now smoked fish and potatoes. "He's unbelievably strong," she said. His size was caused by a hormonal disorder of the adrenal gland, a bit like being on anabolic steroids from birth – hence his great strength. "He can lift the video recorder and push his high chair across the room." His size came as a surprise – Mrs Gilby is slender and only 5ft 2in (1.57m) tall while her husband, Phil, is of average height.

Another one-year-old, Jordan Palmer from Cadbourne, Lincolnshire, is the same size and weight as Ethan; while Shannon Fox weighed 35lb (15.88kg) in February when she was only 11 months old. The heaviest baby of the century was born in Italy in 1955 and weighed 22lb (10kg). Guy Warwick Carr, the heaviest baby born in the UK this century, weighed 15lb 8oz (7kg) at birth in 1992. *Eve. Standard (London), 4 Mar; D.Telegraph, D.Mail, Times, 5 Mar; D.Mirror, 5+10 Mar; Express, 15 Mar 1998.*

woodn't it be good?



FABRICE

TERMITES, THE OUTSIZE ant-like pests capable of destroying whole buildings, have established a colony in Britain for the first time. Their presence was first reported in 1995 in Saunton, North Devon, where they had wrecked a conservatory attached to a holiday bungalow. Dr Tony Bravery, director of the Centre of Timber Technology Construction at the Building Research Station at Garston near Watford, was called in and told by the Department of the Environment to destroy the alien invaders secretly (to avoid a slump in local property values).

He traced the infestation to the timber of a packing case carrying a palm tree, imported some years earlier from south-eastern Europe and installed in the conservatory. He recruited the Barnstaple timber preservation firm McCoy-Hill and believed that the colony had been eradicated with insecticides. McCoy-Hill director said he had advised the BRS at the time that the £200,000 dwelling should be demolished and the ground blitzed with insecticide, but the Government was unwilling to provide the finance.

AP

EATEN OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME: The termites are coming!

Dr Bravery did not expect the termites to spread because he didn't think they could survive the winter in the soil. However, the termites regrouped and this March destroyed the bungalow's timber porch. Dr Bravery is on their trail; research is under way to see how low a temperature they can tolerate.

A queen termite can produce 36,000 eggs a day. Termites are particularly dreaded in Africa, where they are known to borrow through concrete to reach food. They are even said to walk into walls of flaming petrol, putting out the fire with their dead and forming a bridge for the thousands of insects queuing behind. In the United States they cause more property damage than fire and flood put together. In Australia they cut off electricity in the outback by chewing through power lines.

There are 2,600 known termite species. The particular variety in North Devon, *Reticulitermes flavipes*, is fairly common in southern Europe where it is known to destroy wooden houses and roofs. Colonies can have five or six million workers, but typically contain hundreds of thousands. Possibly as a result of global warming, they have been steadily moving north on the European mainland. "They are expanding in Paris and there are colonies on the northern French coast," said Paul Eggleton, head of the termite research group at the Natural History Museum in London. "There are even some in Hamburg, but there they are confined to buildings with central heating. Once established, they are very hard to get rid of."It takes just a handful of survivors to start a colony."

On 29 April, Sydney-born Baroness Gardner of Parkes proposed in the House of Lords that echidnas, a type of anteater, be imported from Australia to deal with the termite menace. "The echidna is a natural predator which thrives on these termites," she told Environment Minister Baroness Hayman. The anonymous bungalow owner was said to be "incensed" by the frivolous suggestion, while Mr Eggleton described it as "ludicrous". On 2 June, the government announced that it would spend £190,000 on a 12-year termite extermination programme. For the first time, two infested houses were mentioned.

Accidental imports and (possibly) global warming are to blame for a whole raft of alien invaders. American cockroaches and black tropical ants (thought to be *Monomarium minimum*) have invaded hospitals, while New Zealand flatworms devour our native earthworms. England's south coast now plays host to *teatoda nobilis*, a slightly poisonous spider from the Canary Islands, as well as large yellow-and-black Mediterranean spiders nicknamed 'wasp spiders' and possibly black widow spiders. Then there are 'super wasps', Colorado beetles, tobacco white flies, South American leaf miners – and malaria-carrying mosquitoes. *Guardian, 13 April+9 May; Independent, Express, 14 April; Western Morning News, 14+16+30 April; Observer, 19 April; D.Telegraph, 29 April+3 June 1998.*

EXTRA EXTRA

HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE WORLD

GOLFERS WARNED NOT TO LICK BALLS
BBC Teletext News, 14 May 1997.

SURGERY FOR DUCK HURT BY ANGLER'S LEFT HOOK
Jersey Evening Post, 9 May 1997.

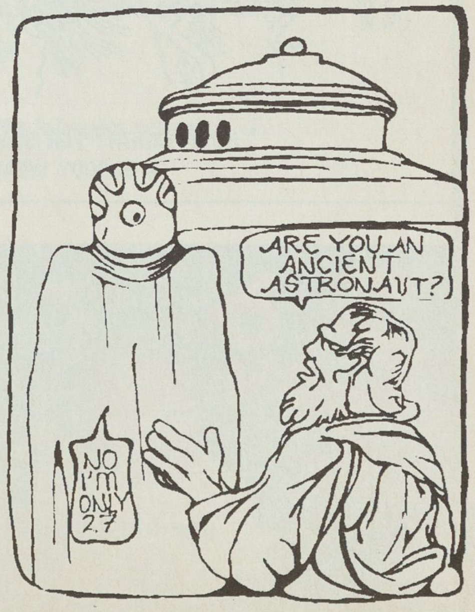
INSECT SEX ORGANS RISE FROM THE DEAD
New Scientist, 12 April 1997.

PROSTITUTES TO HOLD OPEN DAY
Irish Times, 22 May 1997.

SAVE MY LIFE AND I'LL SUE YOU, WARNED SUICIDE NOTE
D.Telegraph, 8 May 1997.

YES, I'D LIKE TO BE CASTRATED, PLEASE
Kansas City Star, 14 April 1997.

ET GUILTY OF ATTEMPTED MURDER
The Star & SA Times International, 30 April 1997.


ARE YOU AN ANCIENT ASTRONAUT?
NO I'M ONLY 27

ANDREW WILLSHAW

buzzed by a saucer

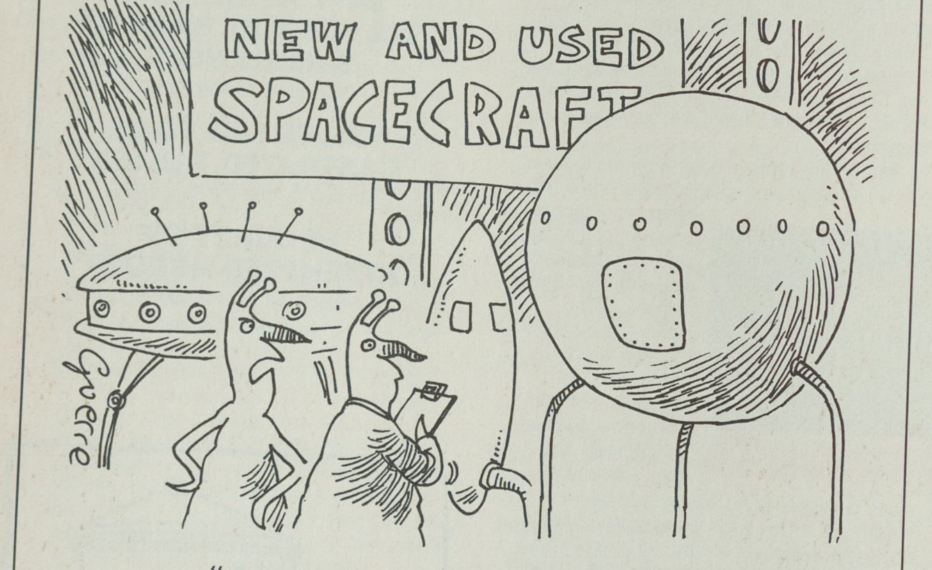
ON 8 MARCH 1997, a week before John Major announced 1 May as the date of the General Election, the house of Home Secretary Michael Howard in Kent was allegedly buzzed by a UFO, but the Conservative Party publicity machine managed to keep a lid on the story, well aware of what cartoonists could make of the story. After all, Howard was used to dealing with illegal aliens and Ann Widdecombe, the former prisons minister, had described him as having "something of the night" about him.

At 3am on the night in question, Sarah Hall, a reporter on the *Folkestone Herald*, was driving along Donkey Street in Lympne, near Hythe, when she heard a strange humming and stopped her car. Ahead of her she saw a huge triangular craft hovering over a field. "It had a large dome at one end and lots of bright lights around the sides and looked quite shiny. I had no idea what it was. I felt the hairs stand up on the back of my neck. After a few seconds it shot off and stopped 500 metres away. It then moved and stopped before flying off."

Her sighting was confirmed by Chris Rolfe, a local ufologist. "This tallies with an unofficial account I was given that it was seen by two firemen hovering above Mr Howard's house at the same time," he said. Eight reports were filed with local ufologists of a triangular craft, grey in colour, hovering in an area 15 miles (24km) around Howard's home.

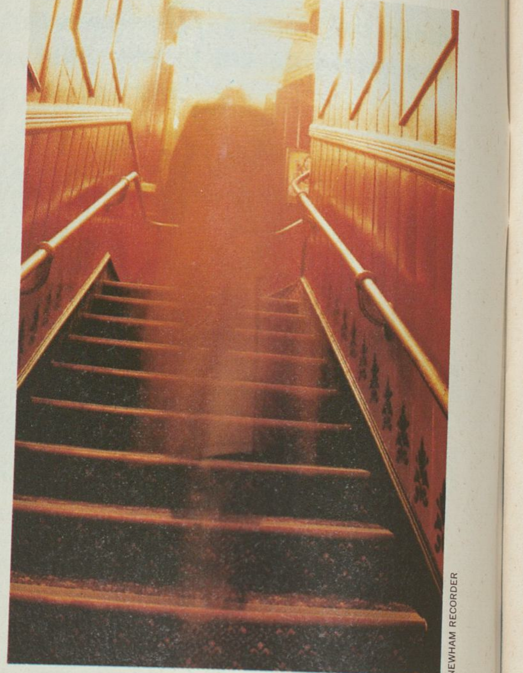
Hall wrote up her experience for her paper, but was astonished to find that when it appeared, the location had been moved from near Howard's home to the other side of the marshes at New Romney. When she attempted to correct this in a subsequent article, Michael Buxton, Howard's agent, telephoned the paper to complain and the story was killed – although Melody Foreman, who took over as acting editor shortly after the sighting, denied that the paper had come under pressure to suppress the story.

Neither the local police nor the Ministry of Defence had any record of an incident that evening, but a police spokesman said it might have been dealt with by Howard's own police protection team. Sheila Gunn, John Major's press secretary, said she was aware of the UFO reports, but the Tories had managed to keep them out of the national papers. *Sunday Times, 18 Jan; D.Mail, 19 Jan 1998.*



"*HOW* MUCH? FOR SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A BLOODY WEATHER BALLOON?"

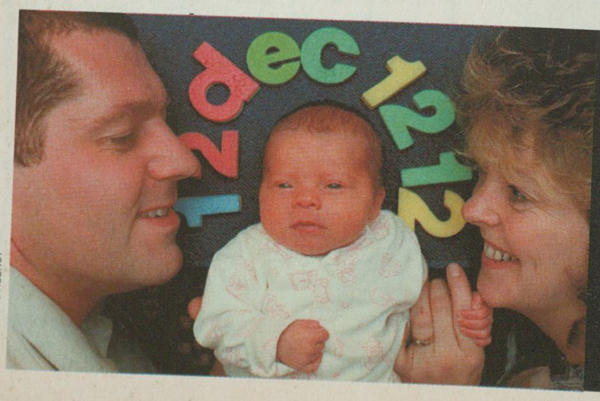
spooking part



NEWHAM RECORDER

LAST DECEMBER, JOHNNY Munday from Forest Gate compiled a photographic record of the Victorian Theatre Royal in Stratford, east London, before an 18-month refurbishment starting this year. The apparent spectre shown here appeared on just one negative. "It was so weird," he said. "It was impossible for anyone to have been on the staircase. I had set my tripod and camera up on the landing and was using the timer. The door at the top of the staircase was locked and I had the Front of House Manager Spencer Dobbin standing at the bottom to make sure no one came up."

Many staff at the theatre believe the apparition is that of Freddie Fredericks, an actor-manager in the early 1900s, whose shade has been seen several times. It was once seen sitting in the gallery watching a performance of *Hamlet*. There is also said to be a flying apparition. "An actor committed suicide by jumping from one of the boxes in the auditorium," said Philip Hedley, the theatre's artistic director. "But fortunately his ghost has only ever been seen on stormy nights." *Newham (east London) Recorder, 10 Dec 1997.*



SOLENT NEWS AGENCY

timely arrival

EMILY BEARD KEPT up a family tradition when she was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, on the 12th day of the 12th month (12 Dec 1997) at 12 minutes past 12 noon. Emily's father David was born on the 4th of the 4th at 4.40pm and her mother Helen, 33, on the 10th of the 10th. Emily's brother Harry, three, arrived on the 6th of the 6th and Helen's mother Sylvia Carpenter on the 11th of the 11th.

Mr Beard, a heating engineer from Gosport, Hampshire, said: "Emily was being born by Caesarean section and was supposed to arrive at 10am. But complications put the birth back. When I rang my mum to tell her, she said I'd been born at 4.40. That's when we realised how weird it was." *Times, Sun, Mirror, 23 Dec 1997.*

AND BABY MAKES THREE. Emily Beard pictured between her parents, David and Helen.

AMAZING STORIES
50'S SAUCER
FLYING SAUCER in BLACK or GLOW IN THE DARK PINK
MAYAN SPACEMAN
WHO PILOTS THE FLYING SAUCERS?
WHO PILOTS THE FLYING SAUCERS?

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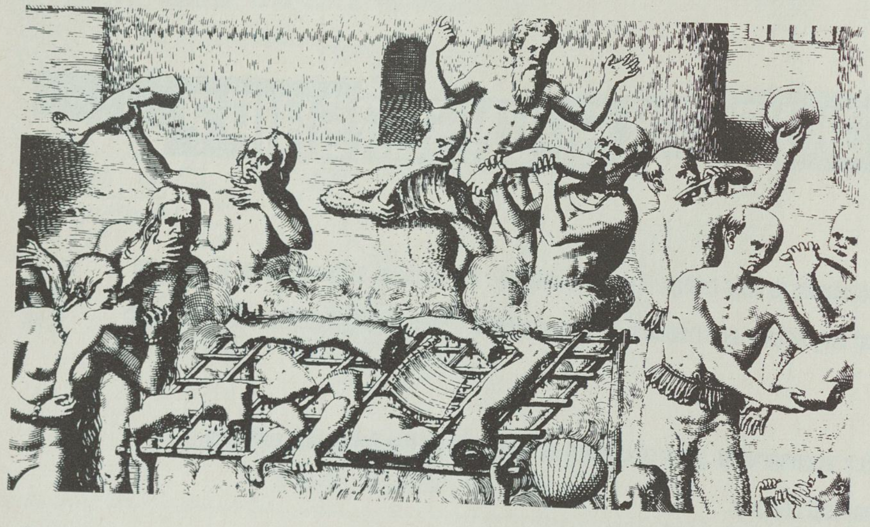
making a meal of man-eaters

Stories of flesh-eating are common to all times and all cultures. Here we explore some alleged modern occurrences and a fresh examination of the archæological and anthropological evidence.

DESPERATE KOREANS

Since March 1996, if not earlier, there have been reports of cannibalism in famine-struck North Korea. By April 1997, peasants were keeping their dead at home until the corpses began to putrefy before burying them for fear the bodies would be dug up and eaten. People were sneaking into China to steal animal feed. By October, at least a million were said to have died of starvation. A military officer fled into China with his family and reported that people were eating their own children and that several in his village had been executed for cannibalism.

Similar stories from the hermit Stalinist state came out this April via Médecins Sans Frontières. The director of an orphanage in the Chinese border town of Yanji told the French agency that she had met an 18-year-old North Korean refugee who said her neighbour killed, salted and ate an abandoned orphan. Such tales have been impossible to verify, but follow the pattern seen during other acute famines like that in the Ukraine in 1933 and in China's Great Leap Forward in 1958-61.



FOTOMAS INDEX

Cannibalism can be attributed to desperation (like the Uraguayan rugby players forced to eat their dead colleagues after the 1971 Andes aircrash); ritual consumption, such as eating the brains of one's enemy; "long pig" (man) as a staple diet (disputed: see below); and depravity. Several serial killers come to mind: Fritz Haarmann, Ed Gein, Jeffrey Dahmer and, in recent years, Andrei Chikatilo, the Russian ex-teacher with 52 cannibalistic murders to his name.

For the six South Korean gangsters arrested in September 1994 and sentenced a month later to hang, the motive was hatred of the rich. The gangsters, led by Kim Ki-hwan, were found guilty of five murders in a year, dismembering the bodies and eating choice cuts before burning the remains in a home-made incinerator and burying them. They planned systematically to kill the best customers at one of Seoul's most exclusive department stores.

A WICKED RUMOUR?

Controversy over cannibalism rages in academia. In his 1979 book *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy*, William Arens, professor of anthropology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, attacked the notion that cannibalism was ubiquitous throughout history and prehistory, suggesting it was all based on malicious hearsay, confusion and colonial condescension. Herodotus heard that the Androphagi from the borders of Scythia ate their enemies. The Romans thought the Ancient Britons were cannibals and the British thought the same about the Irish. In the Middle Ages, Ivo of Narbonne terrified his readers with tales of Mongols devouring tender "breast meat" – and so on. Today many Africans believe that Europeans are partial to human flesh.

The very etymology of the word 'cannibal' shows it has its roots in ignorance and prejudice. Landing on Hispaniola in 1494, Columbus encountered a people he called Caniba, having mistaken them for Mongols, "the people of the Great Khan". The Caniba – whom he also called Caribes – were notorious man-eaters (at least according to their neighbours, the Arawaks) and they soon gave their name both to the Caribbean and a fearsome dietary habit. However, in 1495 Columbus is said to have come upon a recently abandoned cannibalistic feast on Guadeloupe, with human limbs still simmering in cauldrons and roasting on spits. The 16th century saw very influential accounts of cannibalism among the Aztecs by Bernal Díaz and among the Brazilians by Hans Staden.

In 1967, Christy Turner examined a jumble of bones belonging to about 30 members of Arizona's Polacca Walsh tribe, which had died out about 400 years ago. The bones had been cut, burnt and broken open, convincing Turner and other physical anthropologists that these people had been butchered and eaten. The anti-cannibalism camp attributed such bone damage – found in many excavations worldwide – to weathering, burial practices, or scavenging animals.

Arens' view that cannibalism as a custom rather than an individual aberration was imaginary gained many converts among ethnographers. After all, his theories follow standard postmodernist procedure: dismantle Western myths of the Other and show how they have served a sinister, overarching colonial design.

However, the tide might be turning in favour of the physical anthropologists. A ground-breaking work,*Prehistoric Cannibalism at Mancos* (Princeton 1992) by Tim White of the University of California at Berkeley, analyses an Anasazi site in southwest Colorado, occupied from 1150 AD. Using an electron microscope, White examined 2,106 human bone fragments, meticulously recording and assessing percussion marks, burn traces, disarticulations and breakages, and even new categories of bone damage such as "pot polish" (abrasions that result from boiling bones clanging against the inside of a cauldron).

The conclusion was unequivocal: Mancos contained the remains of a cannibal meal comprising 17 adults and 12 children, the heads cooked whole and then broken open with heavy implements. Subsequent excavations indicate that throughout Mexico and the southwest of North America people were being systematically captured, killed and eaten.

SOURCES

Int. Herald Tribune, 18 July 1994, 24 Sept 1996; [R] D.Telegraph, 1 Nov 1994; Times, 1 Nov 1994, 7 Mar 1996, 4 Aug 1997, 12 Mar, 13 April 1998; Observer Life magazine, 19 Mar 1995; Sunday Telegraph, 18 Feb 1996, 20 April 1997; Scotland on Sunday, 7 July 1996; Lawrence Osborne: 'Does man eat man?' Lingua Franca, April/May 1997; [R] 29 April + 1 Oct 1997; Irish Times, 2 Oct 1997 + 16 April 1998; William Arens: 'Man is Off the Menu', Times Higher Education Supplement, 12 Dec 1997; Robin McKie: 'The People Eaters', New Scientist, 14 Mar 1998.

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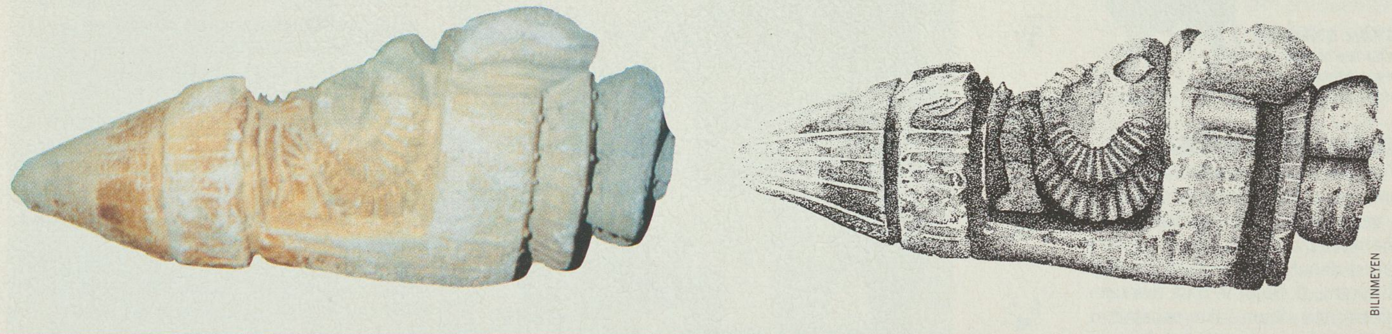
ancient space module in Istanbul?

After languishing in obscurity for up to a quarter of a century, a puzzling artefact can now at last be seen in the Istanbul Museum of Archæology, writes Zecharia Sitchin.



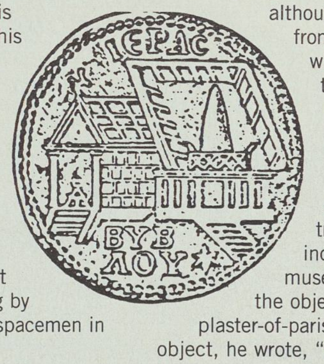
Z SITCHIN

BILINMEYEN

ANCIENT ASTRONAUT: Until recently, this mysterious ancient statuette (pictured left) had only been seen outside the Museum as an illustration (right). It is now on public display.

Fortean Times readers may recall an 1993 item [***FT71:9***] headlined "Ancient Space Module?". It showed a drawing of an artefact captioned: "This object was excavated in the town of Toprakkale (known in ancient times as Tuspa). It is 8.7in (22cm) long, 3in (7.5cm) wide and 3.2in (8cm high), with an estimated age of 3,000 years. To the modern eye, it appears to represent a space vehicle for one, with the pilot's head missing. Some scientists have cast doubt on its age. It is kept in the Museum of Archæology in Istanbul, but not exhibited. *Bilinmeyen, vol.3, p.622.*"

The object is a three-dimensional statuette of a single-seat and wingless rocketship, with its astronaut/pilot seated between the cone-shaped front and an array of exhausts at the back. The pilot wears a ribbed suit covering his whole torso, becoming boot-like at his feet and glove-like at his hands. Whether the one-piece suit continued to cover the head, or whether the astronaut was wearing a special helmet is unknown, for the head is broken off. If its age is confirmed, it is a find of the utmost significance, proving the witnessing by people on Earth of spacecraft and spacemen in the ancient past.



Z SITCHIN

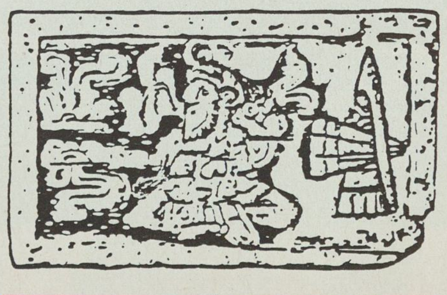
IN TO LAND: A landing platform.

My direct involvement with the object goes back to 1990, when my wife and I toured archæological sites in Turkey at the invitation of the Turkish Government. It followed the publication of my book *The Lost Realms* (*Versunkene Reiche* by Knaur), in which I discussed evidence for the presence in the Americas of mining experts from Anatolia in ancient times.

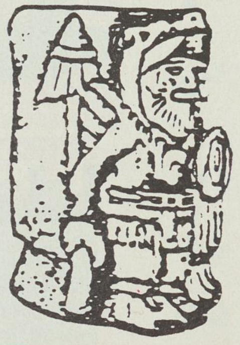
I inquired about the statuette, which had first been reported in the 1970s in a Turkish *Encyclopædia of the Unknown*. The report, which included a photograph, asserted that the artefact "was found during regular archæological excavations in 1975 in the ancient city of Tuspa [...] southeast of Lake Van, where the kingdom of Urartu flourished between 830 to 612 BC." My initial inquiries in Istanbul led nowhere; it was suggested that I ask about these reports in Ankara, at the National Archæological Museum. There they knew nothing, but suggested that I try the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul, but there too I drew a blank.

I then asked a friend, the editor of the German *Magazine 2000* who was going to Turkey, to use his press credentials to see what he could find out. As reported in his magazine (*issue 94, March 1994*), he was told that the museum did indeed have such an artefact. It was taken out of a drawer and shown to him. He was told that it had been "confiscated a couple of years ago from a departing tourist who had acquired it and was going to take it abroad, although the export of antiquities from Turkey is illegal". He asked why it wasn't on display and was told this was because it was obviously a forgery as there were no spacecraft 3,000 years ago.

A competing German magazine, *G.R.A.L.*, picked up the trail. In reply to a written inquiry, Dr Esin Eren of the museum wrote in June 1994 that the object was a forgery "made of plaster-of-paris and marble-powder." The object, he wrote, "was brought to the Istanbul Archæological Museum in 1973 by a dealer in antiquities, making it clear that he wanted to sell it; but when he realised that the object was a forgery, he never came back to retrieve it."



MEXICAN WAVE: Wingless and grooved "rocketships".



Z SITCHIN

FLYER: A bearded "spaceman".

So now there were three versions of the story: a discovery in the 1970s in ancient Tuspa; a confiscation "a couple of years ago" from a tourist; and an unclaimed object left with the Museum by an antiques dealer in 1973. Two representatives of *G.R.A.L.* who then went to Istanbul agreed with the museum that the object was a forgery; they never asked why it was not thrown out, nor were they told the dealer's name and last known address. The sculpture was said to have been cast from a plastic toy.

In March 1997 I was again in Istanbul and met the museum's director, Dr Alpay Pasinli, and his deputy, Sefer Arapoglu. Once they verified my credentials, the object was brought out from a drawer on a velvet tray. I was permitted to hold it and photograph it from all sides. The grooves did not look like casting marks, more like features of a streamlined vehicle. Although the pilot's head was broken off, the light brown colouring of the object remained the same across the fracture: if it had been made of plaster-of-paris and then painted over, the material's original white colour should have show through. If it was, as some suggested, cast from a plastic toy in the 1970s, where was such a toy and why didn't it have wings?

"What do you think?" Dr Alpay asked me. I replied that if this is not a forgery, it could be a discovery more significant than the Giza pyramids; and if it is a forgery, its display (with a disclaimer) could still bring thousands of visitors to the cash-starved museum. The object's uniqueness bothered Dr Alpay; but I told him that there were other examples of wingless craft from antiquity, both in the Old and the New Worlds (see illustrations). One of them depicts a vertical rocketship with an open cockpit very similar to the Turkish object.

After numerous exchanges, I was informed by Dr Alpay that they had decided to put the object on display, with a disclaimer regarding its probable forgery. "I hope this makes you happy" Dr Alpay wrote to me. All those interested in the ancient astronauts theory should go to Istanbul and see the object for themselves.

ALIEN ZOO

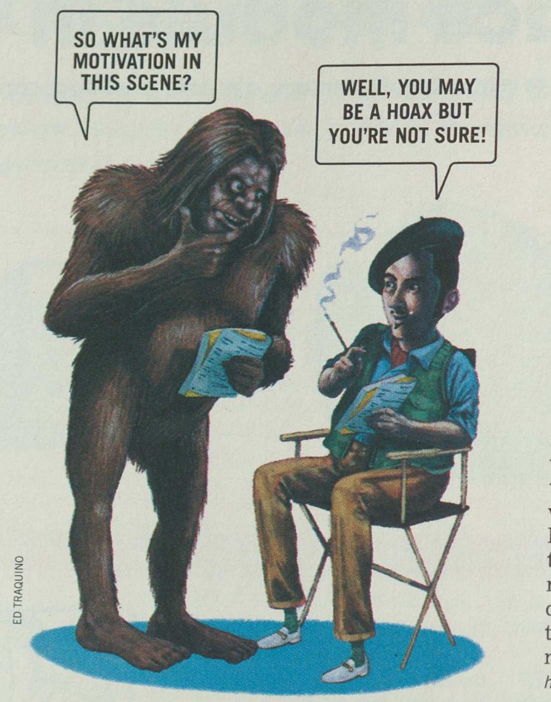
KARL SHUKER
with the latest from planet cryptozoology

TURNING TURTLE?

Vietnam is justly celebrated among cryptozoologists for unfurling a veritable herd of new hoofed mammals in recent years, but its latest debutante is something very different. During the past five centuries, Hoan Kiem Lake, situated in modern-day central Hanoi, has been associated with legends and stories of giant turtles (i.e. freshwater tortoises), and for many years three such creatures have been regularly reported here. On 24 March 1998, however, events escalated when a passing cameraman, who – wonder of wonders for cryptozoology – actually had a videocamera with him, filmed them while they surfaced to gulp air. After the film had been shown on television, Hanoi National University biologist Professor Ha Dinh Duc announced that he has been studying this outsized form of chelonian for the past decade, and believes that continued studies will reveal them to be a new species. A stuffed specimen is currently on exhibition at a small temple on an island in Hoan Kiem Lake, and according to Professor Duc its species is the world's largest freshwater tortoise, attaining lengths of up to 6.5ft (2m) and weights of up to 440lb (200kg). However, it has already been claimed that the narrow-headed soft-shelled turtle *Chitra indica* (another Asian freshwater tortoise) can attain lengths of 6ft (1.8m). In any event, the existence of what could be a new species of very sizeable reptile remaining 'undetected' by science while existing in full view of downtown urban Hanoi's teeming populace is sufficiently noteworthy in itself to encourage further investigation of these remarkable animals. *http://cnn.com/EARTH/9804/13/vietnam.turtles.ap/, posted 13 April 1998.*

THE GREAT THYLACOLEO HUNT

This is the title of another cryptozoologically intriguing website currently accessible on the Net. Set up by Elektromart Pty Ltd in 1998, it offers extensive information concerning the officially extinct Australian marsupial lion *Thylacoleo*

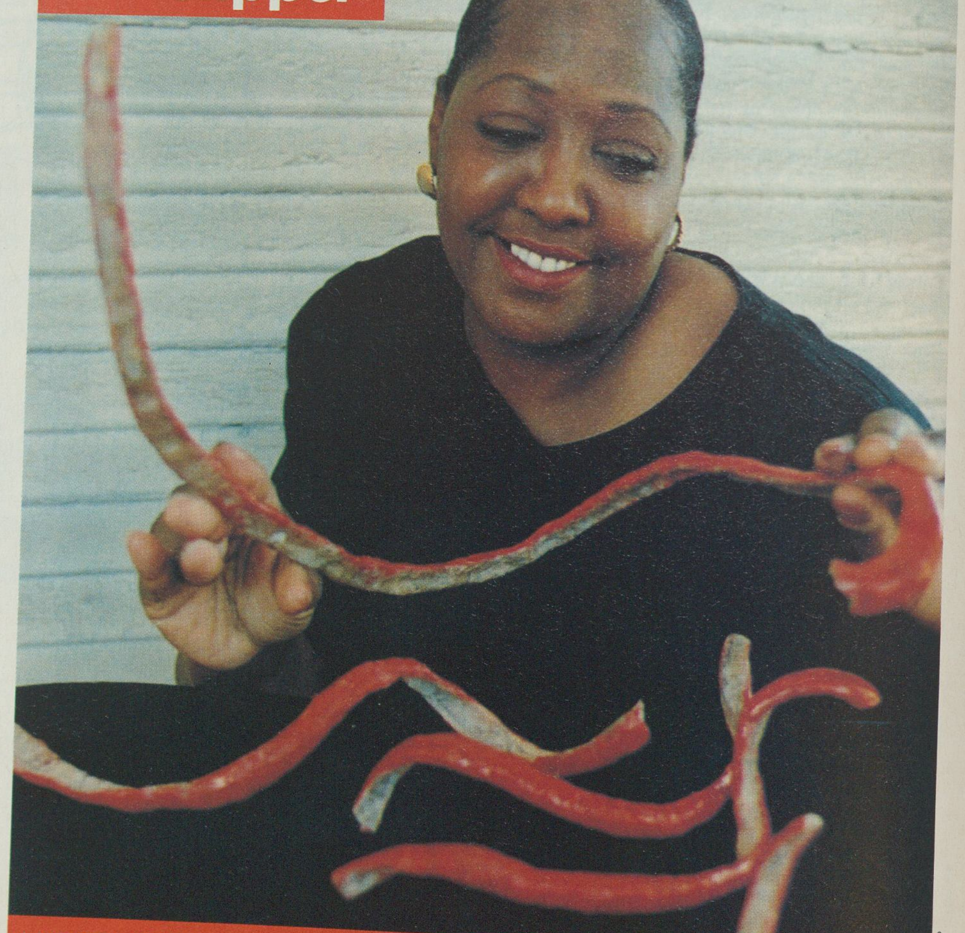

SO WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION IN THIS SCENE?
WELL, YOU MAY BE A HOAX BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE!

ED TRAQUINO

shaggy man tale

AN ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENT to a local Cumbrian paper described the following encounter. He was walking his dog on 25 January on the road out of Beckermet, near Egremont, towards the A595, which runs to the giant Sellafield nuclear complex. At about 4.45pm, he passed Nursery Woods as it was getting dark and heard a snapping of branches. Looking through the trees, he saw "a large creature covered in a sort of ginger brown hair" that seemed to be drinking from a pond about 500ft (150m) into the woods. It appeared to catch sight of him, whereupon "it reared up on its hind legs and moved off slowly further into the woods." He reckoned it was 6ft 6in (2m) tall and weighed about 200lb (90kg). It was not a deer as it made off on its hind legs. He was going to report the sighting to the police, but his wife persuaded him not to for fear of ridicule. Our correspondent Kevin Haney suggests it might be the same ape-like animal encountered near Silecroft a few years ago. *The Whitehaven News (Cumbria), 19 Feb, 5 Mar 1998.*

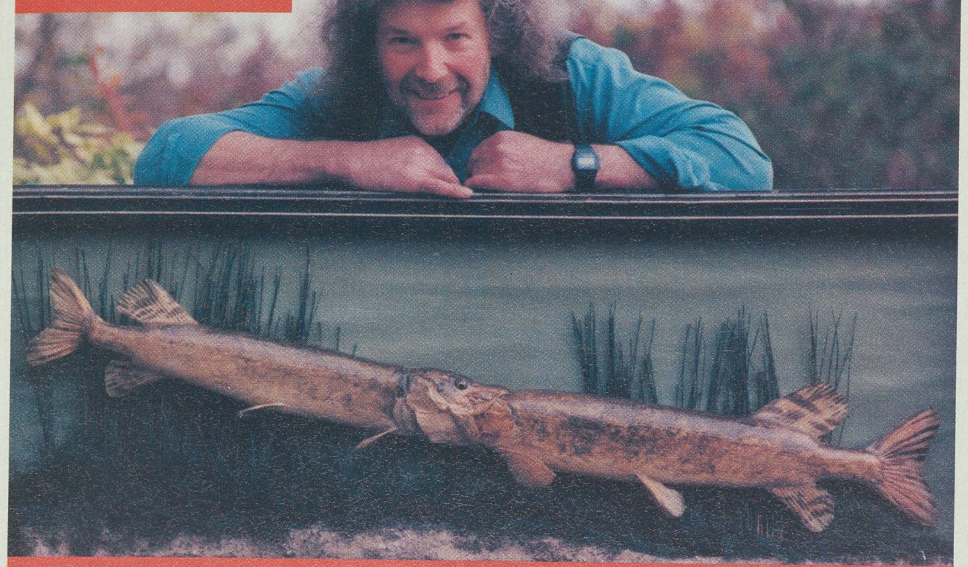
nail clipper



LAURETTA ADAMS, 43, from Dallas, Texas, had her fingernails cut last October, ending her bid to have the longest in the world. She had been growing them for 24 years. One was 35in (89cm) long and their combined length was 12ft 6in (381cm). She had some way to go to beat the record of 18ft 10ins (574cm) held by a man in India. *[AP] 18 Oct 1997.*

AP

fish face



NEWCASTLE JOURNAL

THESE TWO PIKE, one apparently trying to swallow the other, were found on the banks of the Tyne in the 19th century. The bizarre exhibit is kept in the stores of the Hancock Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne. "It is quite a dramatic sight and I have seen nothing like it", said Eric Morton, assistant keeper of biology (pictured). *Newcastle Journal, 10 Nov 1997.*

absolute boulderdash!

DAVID LEE, A retired insurance manager, heard a deafening crash on the roof of his semi-detached house in Hove, Sussex, around midnight on 3 May 1998. A 4lb (1.8kg) lump of rock had shattered roof tiles and bounced onto his garden path. It was black and looked like tarmac, except that it was much harder. "I can only assume it's a meteorite," said Mr Lee, 57. "I don't think anyone could have thrown something that heavy on to the top of the house and caused the tiles to break. It has left quite an indentation." Alternatively, it could be man-made space junk. *D. Mail, Express, 4 May 1998.*

A NUMBER OF meteorite falls were reported last year with incidents in Colombia, Greenland and Australia [***FT108:8***]. The Colombia meteorite is believed to have resulted in the first related fatalities.

JOHN CONNOR PRESS ASSOCIATES (BRIGHTON)

ALIEN ZOO

CONTINUED

carnifex, favoured by many cryptozoologists as the identity of the elusive cat-headed yarri or Queensland tiger, but little in the way of precise details as to the aforementioned hunt for it. Also intriguing is that the feline creatures described in reports offered up here as evidence of supposed living *Thylacoleo* specimens are from Victoria, and uniformly brown or black – a far cry from the principally Queensland-based, black-and-white banded yarris documented in previous cryptozoological works, but very reminiscent of supposed OOP pumas and black panthers reported in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia. *http://www.netstra.com.au/~elek/Thylacoleo/thylo1.html*

MYSTERY TRACKS IN MONGOLIA

Chad Arment's cryptozoology website contains some interesting recent news from Mongolia. In December 1997, Chad was contacted by a Russian zoologist seeking sponsors for a planned expedition to northern Mongolia to investigate what might be responsible for a series of mysterious 'turtle-like' tracks that appeared annually between 1985 and 1991 on the sandy bank of one of this region's lakes, and which were seen on one occasion by a Russian geologist. As noted by Chad, seals have been reported from some of Mongolia's inland lakes. Could these be responsible? If anyone has any further details or ideas, contact Chad. *http://www.herper.com/Mongturtle.html*

TAMMAR TROUBLE

Recent stories about the rediscovery on Kawau, a New Zealand iland, of the tamar (more correctly, tammar or dama) *Macropus eugenii*, a small species of mainland Australian wallaby. are sadly incorrect. They seem to arise from evident if unexplained confusion with the history of another mainland Australian wallaby – the *parma M. parma*. This latter species was indeed thought to be extinct until unexpectedly rediscovered on Kawau in 1966, where specimens had been introduced from Australia by settlers in 1870. Also introduced to Kawau back in the late 1800s by a former governor of South Australia, the tammar has never been written off as extinct on the mainland (nor even considered to be very endangered), where it is classed as common within a limited habitat. *Edinburgh Evening News, 22 Jan; Times, Daily Telegraph, 23 Jan 1998.*

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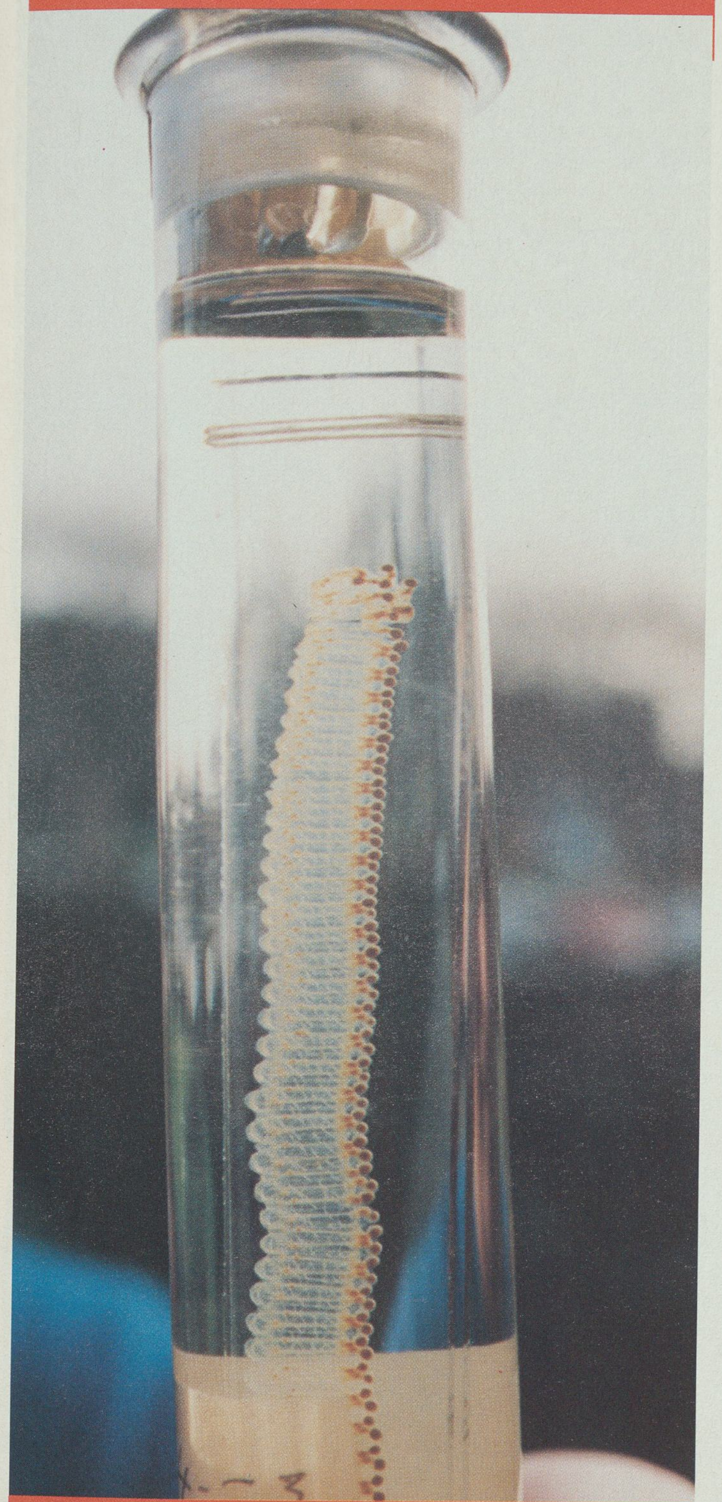
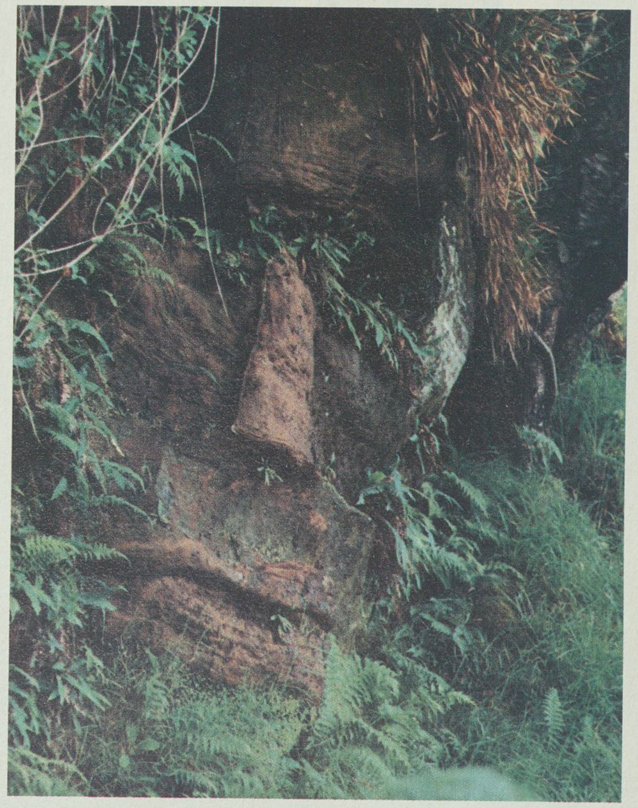
S336

as the worm turns


LIVERPOOL DAILY POST & ECHO

A NEW WORM-LIKE marine species may have been discovered living in the wreck of the Derbyshire. The translucent, long-antennaed creature was caught on film of the bulk carrier, which sunk off the South China Sea in 1980. Experts are considering whether to name it after the 159,000 ton wreck. The ship was sunk in a typhoon with the loss of 44 lives. The case was reopened in March when the deputy prime minister John Prescott said new evidence would be examined. Footage has pointed to an unsecured hatch as the likely cause of the disaster as 80ft (24m) waves battered the ship. *Liverpool Echo, 19 Mar 1998.*

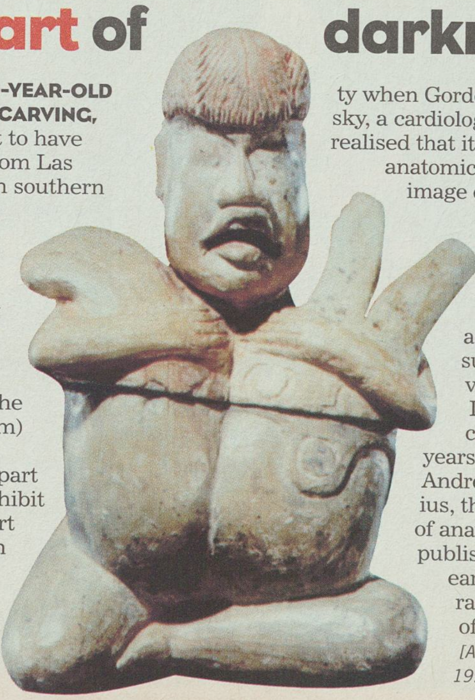
SIMULACRACORNER



This 'rock face' was photographed last summer by Jim Howie of Kilwinning in Ayrshire. It is situated on Holy Island (off the Isle of Arran in the Firth of Clyde).

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images. Send them to the editorial post box (with a stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon) and we'll pay a fiver or ten dollars for any we use.

heart of darkness

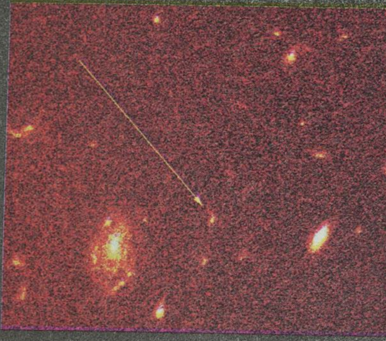

AP

A 3,000-YEAR-OLD OLMEC CARVING, thought to have come from Las Bocas in southern Mexico, may be the oldest representation of the human heart. The 7in (18cm) figure formed part of an exhibit in the Art Museum in Princeton University when Gordon Bendersky, a cardiologist, realised that it was an anatomically correct image of the heart, with a pulmonary artery, an aorta and a superior vena cava. It was carved 2,500 years before Andreas Vesalius, the "father of anatomy", published the earliest accurate images of the heart. *[AP] 12 Sept 1997.*

WEIRD SCIENCE

PAUL PARSONS turns his telescope towards this month's collection of heavenly bodies . He can be reached on pparsons@pavilion.co.uk.

CHEWING ON THE COSMIC BANGER



A huge burst of gamma rays from a distant galaxy is the most energetic outpouring of energy since the Big Bang, in which our Universe was created. That's the claim of astronomers at the California Institute of Technology, who observed the burst in December. Earlier last year astronomers found that gamma-ray bursts are produced in distant galaxies rather than within our own, ending 20 years of debate; but the December burst has foxed them once again. Coming from a galaxy 12 billion light years away, the energy from the burst temporarily outshone the combined light of every star in the Universe. Most of the theoretical models for gamma-ray bursts cannot explain such a large output, forcing astronomers to consider new models, involving exotica such as rotating black holes. *Sunday Times, 3 May; D.Telegraph, Times, 7 May 1998.*

MAGNETIC STARS BURST SOFTLY

Separate from gamma-ray bursts are a lower-energy phenomenon within our galaxy called soft gamma repeaters. After 19 years of head-scratching, their origin may now have been pinpointed. In 1992, two American researchers predicted the existence of an unusual kind of star called a magnetar – an object with a magnetic field hundreds of times more powerful than previously thought possible. New evidence relayed by NASA's X-Ray Timing Explorer satellite now indicates not only that magnetars exist but that millions of them may lie within the bounds of our galaxy. Astronomers say the enormous magnetic field heats the surface of the star and could produce the soft gamma repeaters. *New Scientist, 2 May 1998.*

LIGHT WORK

The speed of light – one of the supposed fundamental constants of physics – may not be constant after all, claim an international team of astronomers. They have measured a variation in the fine structure constant – a number derived from the speed of light. Their results show that 8 billion years ago the fine structure constant was a few parts in 100,000 smaller than it is today. Intriguingly, varying constants is one feature of theories which predict the Universe to have extra dimensions, unseen because they are curled up smaller than the size of an atom. *New Scientist, 28 Mar 1998.*

WARM AND WET

Last year, astronomers from University College London observed water in sunspots – cool regions on the Sun's surface. Now, astronomers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center say that the cool red giant stars Betelgeuse and Antares have steam in their atmospheres. Red giants are bloated stars, much cooler than our Sun. Because they are cooler, they can have steam all over – not just in the spotty regions. Even so, it's estimated that less than a 0.00001 of a per cent of the stars are actually made of water. *D.Telegraph, Guardian, 18 Jul 1998.*

LITTLE FLUFFY COMETS

Two hundred million tons of comets strike the Earth every year, says Louis Frank of the University of Iowa. In 1986, Frank interpreted "dark holes" in satellite pictures of the Earth's upper atmosphere as clouds of water vapour, released following the impact of fluffy comets, each about [illegible]ze of a house and made of snow. Some scientists claim that the holes are just blemishes on the photographic images, while others say the upper atmosphere is too dry for Frank's theory to hold water. But now, Frank and colleague John Sigwarth have analysed how the number of holes seen varies with time. Looking at data for two years, they find a repeated dip in hole numbers during mid-January. Such a seasonal variation is hard to explain as photographic noise. *New Scientist, 12 Jul 1997; The Record (Hackensack, NJ), 12 May 1998.*

LOST AND FOUND

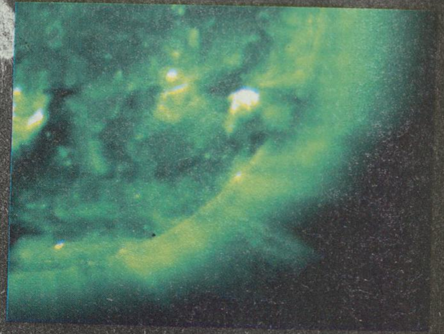
A group o[illegible]onomers from England and America think they have spotted some of the Universe's missing mass. Ninety per cent of the cosmos is composed of missing, or dark, matter. Astronomers know this by inferring how much gravitating mass must be present in galaxies and clusters to hold them together and then comparing this to how much bright matter they can actually see. But now a team led by Richard Lieu, of the University of Alabama, Huntsville, have found a haze of ultraviolet light coming from several galaxy clusters, which they claim is the telltale glow of the elusive dark matter. *New Scientist, 9 May 1998.*

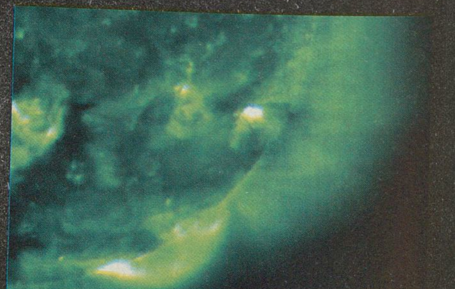
PLANET AHOY!

The Hubble Space Telescope has recently relayed the first direct image of a planet outside our Solar System. The object was accidentally observed during studies of a binary star system, 450 light years away in the constellation of Taurus. Until now the glare from stars has swamped the light from any nearby planets. But this object is visible because it has been flung 200 billion kilometres away from its parent stars. Experts believe the variable gravitational field of the binary star system was responsible for sling-shotting the planet into space. This idea is reinforced by a bright trail, seen joining the planet with the stars. The researchers say this could be a tunnel through the dusty cocoon surrounding the stars, dug out by the careening planet and illuminated by the light from the stars. *New Scientist, 6 Jun 1998.*

SUN DIVE!

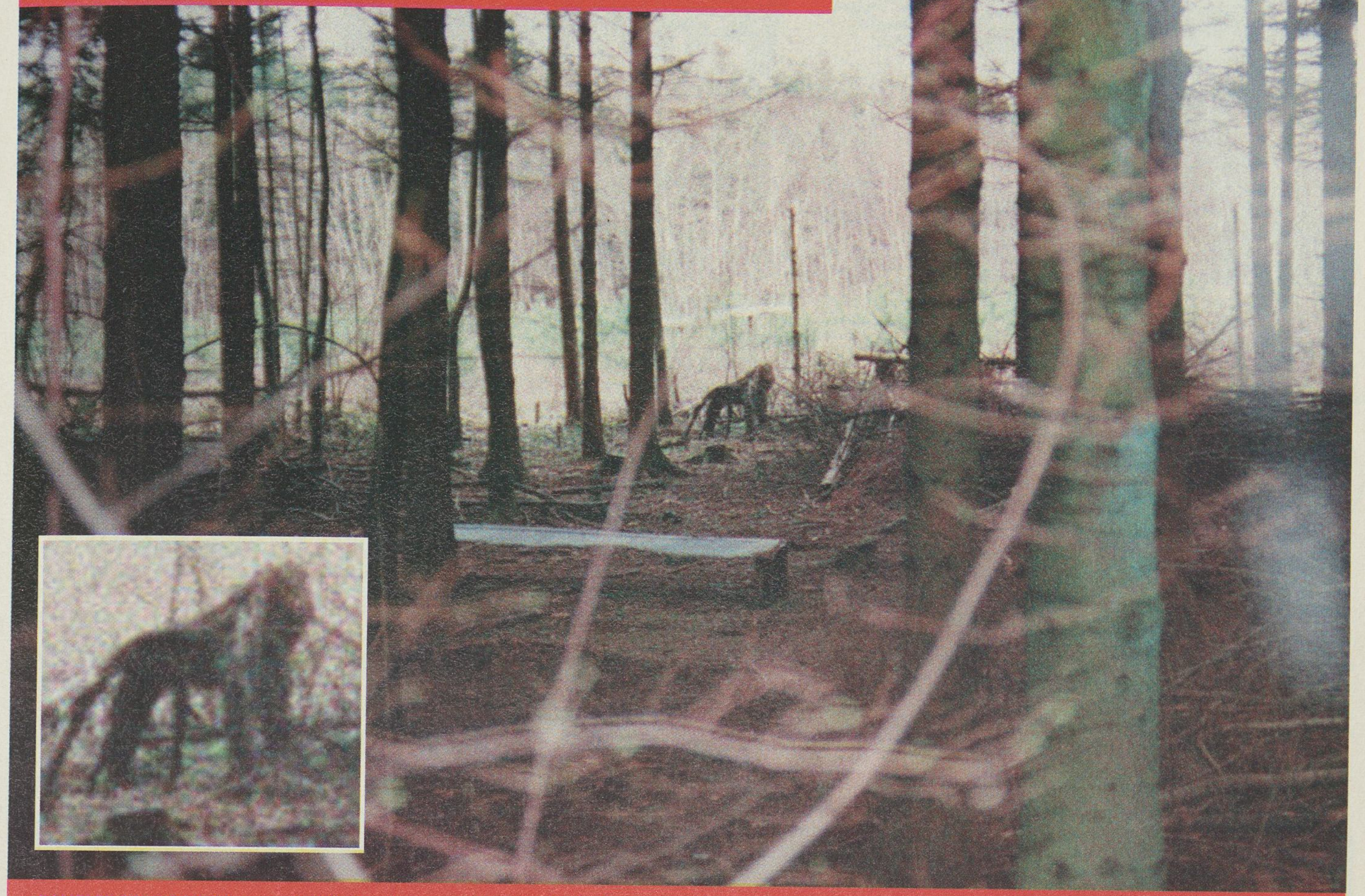
At the beginning of June, two comets were swallowed whole by the Sun, which then showed its approval by belching a cloud of gas and magnetic energy into space. The observations were made by astronomers using the NASA/ESA Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) satellite. While SOHO has discovered some 50 comets during its 3-year life, it has never seen two strike the Sun in such quick succession. To add further synchronicity, NASA scientists say that the subsequent solar eruption is probably unrelated to the impact of the comets. *http://umbra.nascom.nasa.gov/comets/SOHO_sungrazers.html*





ALL IMAGES NASA

if you go down to the woods...



WESTERN DAILY PRESS

RAMBLER TONY POWELL was startled when he spotted what he thought was a baboon-like creature lurking among the trees of Brackenbury Wood in North Nibley, near Dursley, Gloucestershire. When he was about 100ft (30m) away, he realised the 'baboon' was a tree stump with roots. "I had my two Labradors with me," he said, "and I thought it was odd that they didn't react." *Western Daily Press, 9 Mar 1998.*

Israel's lost tribe

A GROUP OF hill people living on the border between Burma and the Indian provinces of Manipur and Mizoram are seeking help from Israel – in an eerie replay of the 1983 crisis when the endangered Jews of Ethiopia were forced to embarrass Israel into airlifting them to Tel Aviv.

The population of 1.5 million, who look Burmese, are known variously as Shinlung, Kuki, Mizos and Mar. They call themselves "the Children of Menmasseh"; Menmasseh is thought to be a corruption of Menashe, one of the lost tribes of Israel. A song in an archaic form of their language tells how the Menmasseh crossed a sea with the waters parting before them, and were guided in their wanderings by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

The entire tribe converted to Christianity within five decades of encountering their first missionary in 1894. "We became Christian because we had a tradition that one day a white man would come with our long-lost book of worship," according to a Menmasseh elder. "When the Christians came, we thought, 'This must be our lost religion.'" Eventually, some Menmasseh concluded that their Old Testament stories put them in the tradition of Judaism.

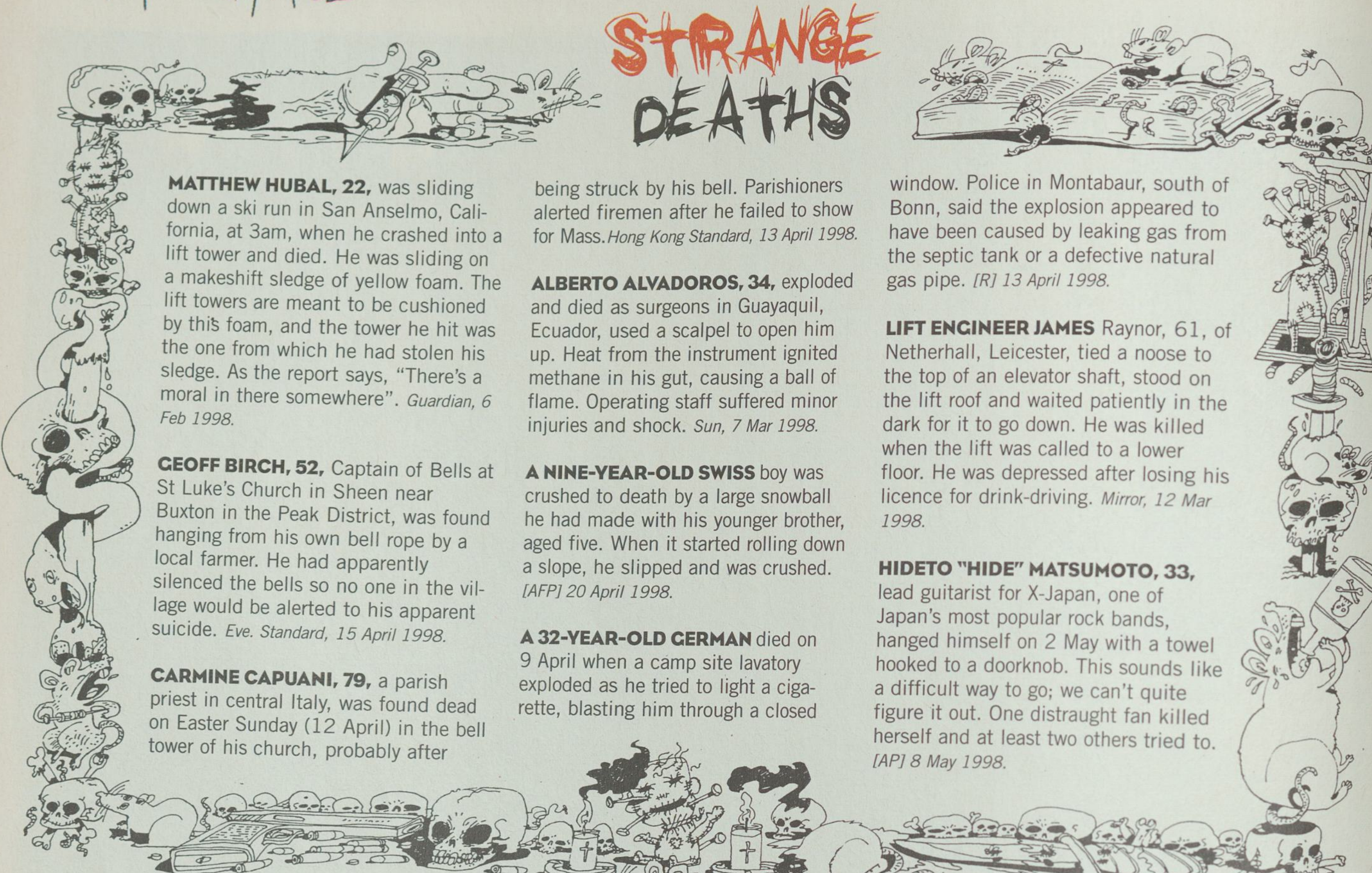
In 1951, an elder, Tchala, had a dream that the time had come for the Menmasseh to return to their ancient land. He gathered a following and wrote to the Israeli government that the tribe was ready to come home – but he died in India without receiving an answer. Today, approximately 3,000 Menhasseh call themselves Bnei Menashe, ("the children of Menashe") and live Orthodox Jewish lives. The villages in Mizoram and Manipur are now dotted with synagogues and some men have walked for hundreds of miles to be circumcised in Imphal, the Manipur capital. Orthodox Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail of Jerusalem has championed the Bnei Menashe cause and the community regards him as its spiritual leader. Largely though his efforts, 268 Bnei Menashe have emigrated to Israel, where they have formally converted to Judaism. Their arrival sparked hysterical accounts in the Israeli press of an imminent deluge of Indians.

COMING HOME? the Bnei Menashe want to settle in Israel

PHOTO COURTESY OF KULANU INC

Most prominent among the 17 guerrilla groups in Manipur are Naga tribesmen who, say the Menmasseh, are conducting a campaign of ethnic cleansing against them. The Nagas are using the Menashe legends of belonging to another homeland as a pretext for driving them out of the hill country. Recently, two synagogues were burned in a Naga-led pogrom in the town of Churachandpur.

Still, Israeli authorities are turning a deaf ear to the pleas of the Bnei Menashe. In Jerusalem, a Bnei Menashe soldier named Daniel serving in the Israel Defence Forces says: "We say we are a lost tribe of Israel. But even if we are not, we are a small group dedicated to Judaism. My father had to die waiting for an entry visa that never came, even while I was in the army defending Israel's borders. Is our skin too yellow for Jerusalem?" *Report by Simcha Jacobovici in the Toronto Globe and Mail, 31 Jan 1998.*



STRANGE DEATHS

MATTHEW HUBAL, 22, was sliding down a ski run in San Anselmo, California, at 3am, when he crashed into a lift tower and died. He was sliding on a makeshift sledge of yellow foam. The lift towers are meant to be cushioned by this foam, and the tower he hit was the one from which he had stolen his sledge. As the report says, "There's a moral in there somewhere". *Guardian, 6 Feb 1998.*

GEOFF BIRCH, 52, Captain of Bells at St Luke's Church in Sheen near Buxton in the Peak District, was found hanging from his own bell rope by a local farmer. He had apparently silenced the bells so no one in the village would be alerted to his apparent suicide. *Eve. Standard, 15 April 1998.*

CARMINE CAPUANI, 79, a parish priest in central Italy, was found dead on Easter Sunday (12 April) in the bell tower of his church, probably after being struck by his bell. Parishioners alerted firemen after he failed to show for Mass. *Hong Kong Standard, 13 April 1998.*

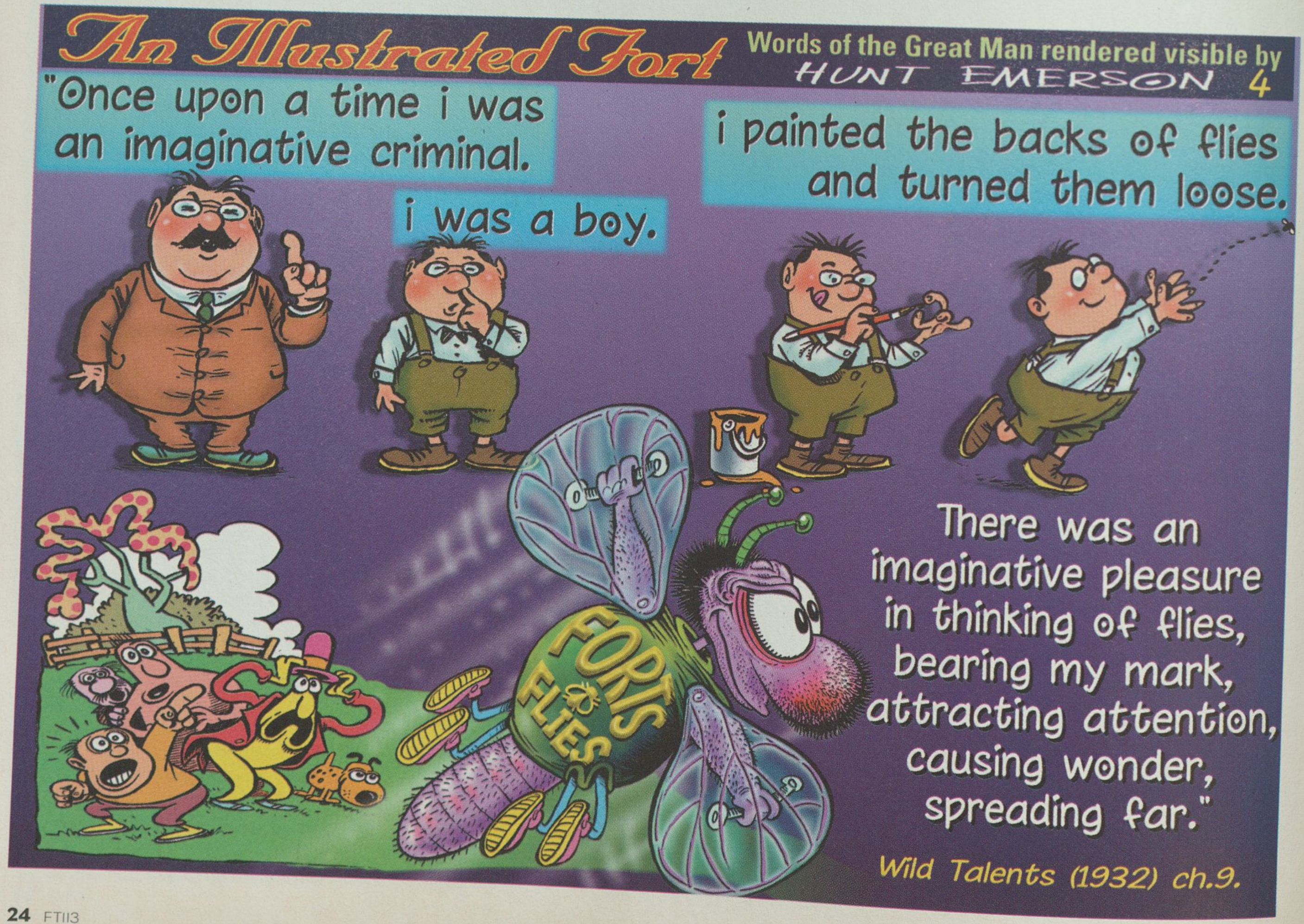
ALBERTO ALVADOROS, 34, exploded and died as surgeons in Guayaquil, Ecuador, used a scalpel to open him up. Heat from the instrument ignited methane in his gut, causing a ball of flame. Operating staff suffered minor injuries and shock. *Sun, 7 Mar 1998.*

A NINE-YEAR-OLD SWISS boy was crushed to death by a large snowball he had made with his younger brother, aged five. When it started rolling down a slope, he slipped and was crushed. *[AFP] 20 April 1998.*

A 32-YEAR-OLD GERMAN died on 9 April when a camp site lavatory exploded as he tried to light a cigarette, blasting him through a closed window. Police in Montabaur, south of Bonn, said the explosion appeared to have been caused by leaking gas from the septic tank or a defective natural gas pipe. *[R] 13 April 1998.*

LIFT ENGINEER JAMES Raynor, 61, of Netherhall, Leicester, tied a noose to the top of an elevator shaft, stood on the lift roof and waited patiently in the dark for it to go down. He was killed when the lift was called to a lower floor. He was depressed after losing his licence for drink-driving. *Mirror, 12 Mar 1998.*

HIDETO "HIDE" MATSUMOTO, 33, lead guitarist for X-Japan, one of Japan's most popular rock bands, hanged himself on 2 May with a towel hooked to a doorknob. This sounds like a difficult way to go; we can't quite figure it out. One distraught fan killed herself and at least two others tried to. *[AP] 8 May 1998.*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"Once upon a time i was an imaginative criminal.
i was a boy.
i painted the backs of flies and turned them loose.
There was an imaginative pleasure in thinking of flies, bearing my mark, attracting attention, causing wonder, spreading far."
FORT'S FLIES
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How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

The Amazing Experience of Robert Heap

"Of *course* I place you! You're Bob Jones of Birmingham."

"If I remember correctly – and I *do* remember correctly – John Bagshaw, the supermarket man, introduced me to you at the dinner of the Bowls Club three years ago in October. I haven't laid eyes on you since. How is the motor business? How did the merger work out?"

The assurance of this speaker – in the crowded corridor of the Hotel Piccadilly compelled me to look at him, though it is not my habit to 'eavesdrop' even in a hotel reception.

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world"

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world," said my friend Bob Clark, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toast-master was introducing a long line of guests to Dr. Furst. I got in line, and when it came my turn, Dr. Furst asked, "What are your initials Mr. Heap, your occupation and telephone number?" Why he asked this, I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd the sixty people he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What's more, he named each person's occupation and telephone number.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, playing cards, prices, newspaper articles and anything else the guests gave him in rapid order.

"I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening"

When I met Dr. Furst he rather bowled me over by saying: "There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts, or something I have read.

"*You can do this as easily as I do*. Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things.

"My own memory," continued Bruno Furst, "was originally very faulty. On meeting a man I would forget his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably over ten thousand men and women in the world whose names I can recall instantly on meeting them."

"That is alright for you, Dr. Furst," I interrupted, "you have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Heap," he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first of twelve simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system, and you will find it just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to. His Course did; I got it the next day.

When I tackled the first lesson, I was surprised to find I had learned – in about one hour – how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That lesson *stuck*. So did the other eleven. Indeed, I was so impressed I introduced Dr. Furst's Course to this country.

"My memory has improved out of all recognition"

Read this letter from Mr. J. W. Sullivan of London SW2:

"Since I started your course my memory has improved out of all recognition."

Mr. Sullivan didn't exaggerate.

Dr Bruno Furst's Course is fantastic! I can rely on my memory now. I can recall the name of anyone I have met before – and I keep getting better. I can remember any figures I wish. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly. What's more my concentration has improved.

Now I am sure of myself, confident, and relaxed when I get on my feet at the club, at a dinner, in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

The most enjoyable part of it all is that I am now a good conversationalist – and I used to be as quiet as a lamb when I got into a crowd of people.

Now I can call up like a flash of lightning almost any fact I want. I used to think a 'hair trigger' memory belonged to the prodigy and genius. Now I see that every one of us has that kind of memory if we know how to make it work.

It's a wonderful thing, after groping around in the dark for so many years, to be able to switch on your mind and see instantly everything you want to remember.

What's more, I have become more popular and influential.

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's amazing Course are available free on request. You will be astounded to learn what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in both business and social advancement will be enormous.

ROBERT HEAP

"Send for a free memory booklet - with proof that this method really works"

Full details of Dr. Furst's easy-to-follow method for developing a powerful memory are contained in a free booklet entitled "Adventures in Memory". To obtain your copy, and further proof that Dr. Furst's system really works, merely post the coupon (you don't even need to stamp your envelope), or send your name and address to: Memory & Concentration Studies, (Dept. FEM48), FREEPOST 198, Manchester M60 3DL.

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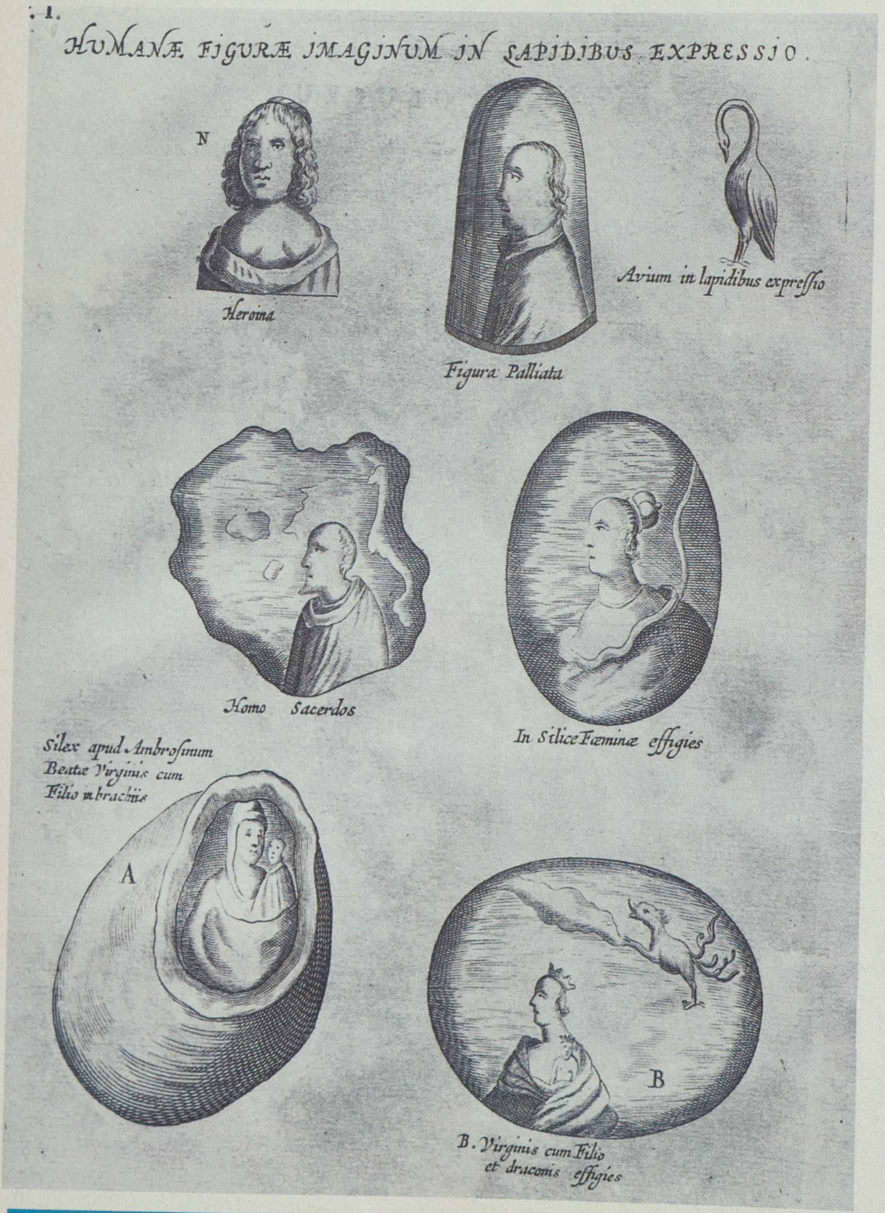
BLESS THIS HOUSE

The tranquility of a Welsh farm is rocked by sightings of the BVM and other strange happenings. Here we present owner Rose-Mary Gower's own story followed by an analysis of the case by Janet Bord and Tristan Gay Hulse.


I.
HUMANÆ FIGURÆ IMAGINUM IN LAPIDIBUS EXPRESSIO.
N
Heroina
Figura Palliata
Avium in lapidibus expressio
Homo Sacerdos
In Silice Fœminæ effigies
Silex apud Ambrosinum Beatæ Virginis cum Filio in brachiis
A
B
B. Virginis cum Filio et draconis effigies

LIKE A ROLLING STONE: Human images, including Virgin and Child, found on natural unworked stones, from Athanasius Kircher's *Mnundu Subterraneus* (Amsteram, 1678 edition).

FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY

ROSE-MARY GOWER'S STORY

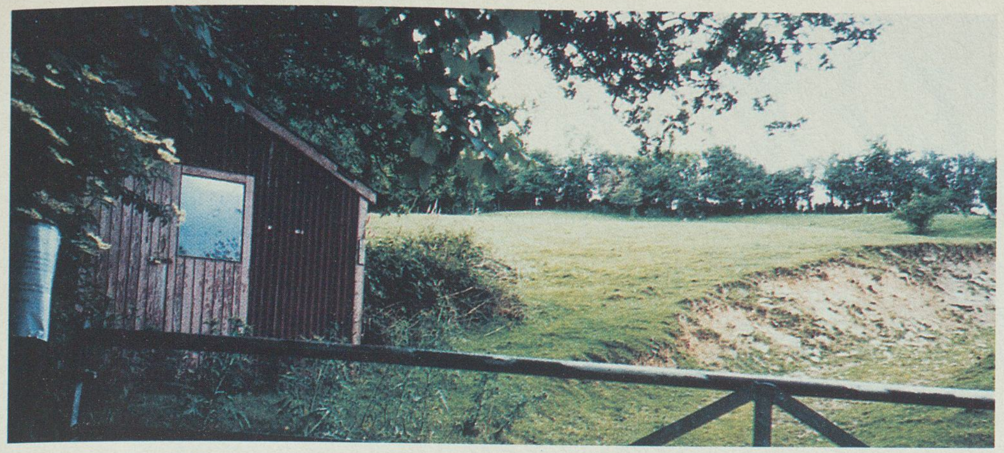
We purchased our farmhouse (circa 1610) and a field in Flintshire, North Wales in February 1997 . The latter is steep and rugged, only fit for grazing a few sheep. We were quite unprepared for the field to hit the headlines after an Irish couple, on a walking tour of Wales, claimed to have seen a vision of the Virgin Mary while resting at the field gate. Furthermore they claimed that his frozen shoulder and her cataract were miraculously cured as a result of this experience.

After the media, both local and national, reported this incident, we had a great many visitors from all over the UK and Ireland hoping for healing. Many were dying of cancer and although, sadly, none reported a cure, some said they had recovered from other, less serious ailments such as psoriasis. A lovely couple from Belfast came to pray for peace in the Province. Coincidence or not, a day or two later the ceasefire was reinstated.

On 17 May 1997 my daughter and a friend ran to the top of the field "Madonna spotting" while I watched from the gate. Although it was twilight, I could see the girls quite clearly in the gloom. Suddenly I became aware of a third figure – it was white and hazy, and my brain interpreted it as the Virgin Mary. The vision, or whatever it was, lasted for about five seconds before the girls came running down the field, shouting that they thought they had seen something and had felt a presence!

A lady from Flint reported seeing a vision of a person in white on 10 August. In January 1998 my 12-year-old Down's Syndrome son, John-Paul, was staring at the barn in the field through the kitchen window. When I asked him what he was looking at, he replied, "The ghost in the barn". He said that it was a blue lady, waving to him. John-Paul is not a fanciful child, and I do believe he saw something. A couple of days later, I found a stone by the barn which had a bluish tinge and a "face" resembling, in my opinion, that of Mother Teresa. I showed this to John-Paul who immediately said, "That's the blue lady".

I have taken a number of photographs of the barn and some have shown strange images on the windows. These images appear on the prints but were not visible to me at the time I took the photos. The first, taken in April, could, with reasonable imagination, be said to have a religious connotation. The second showed some letters – ELPELE. Their significance, if any, escaped me but I continued to take photographs at intervals. After many showing nothing out of the ordinary, I snapped an unearthly face which has given everyone who has seen it the creeps. Although I am not conventionally religious, this induced me to put a cross in each of the barn windows. The most recent weird photo to date shows, to my mind, a little figure with the suggestion of wings behind it. Before taking the photographs with a simple 'aim and click' type of camera, I was careful to check the windows for anything that could give rise to these strange effects. I found nothing.



I have spent a lot of time trying to rationalise these happenings. A vision may be caused by the brain trying to interpret some unusual natural phenomena, such as a trick of the light. Then one will fall back on one's cultural and religious upbringing to give meaning to something out of the ordinary.

As far as the cures are concerned, I think that, as we do not entirely understand the working of the subconscious, it might be possible for something like our field to act as a 'mental catalyst' in promoting the body's own healing powers.

I don't have any opinion about the photographs.

We have no wish for our field to become another Lourdes. However, we are happy for people to meditate quietly at the gate, as the peace and tranquillity lift the spirits.

THE PLACE IS SOMEHOW IMPORTANT IN BRINGING THESE EVENTS INTO BEING

THE INVESTIGATION

It was about four months after the events of February 1997 that we first became aware of the vision claims and went to talk to Rose-Mary Gower. Since then, we have remained in touch and have been kept up to date with subsequent happenings. Tristan and I have thought about the events, discussed them and tried to make sense of them. The trouble with paranormal phenomena is that they are elusive: they rarely put on a show for investigators, who are, therefore, dealing with the events at second hand. Probably for this reason, only a very small proportion of paranormal mysteries are 'solved' and those that are have usually been hoaxes. If the investigators have a will to believe, a case will retain its mystery (and even have it enhanced) even though it may actually be a hoax; but if the investigators are sceptical, they will brand a case a hoax even though the evidence doesn't necessarily support this conclusion.

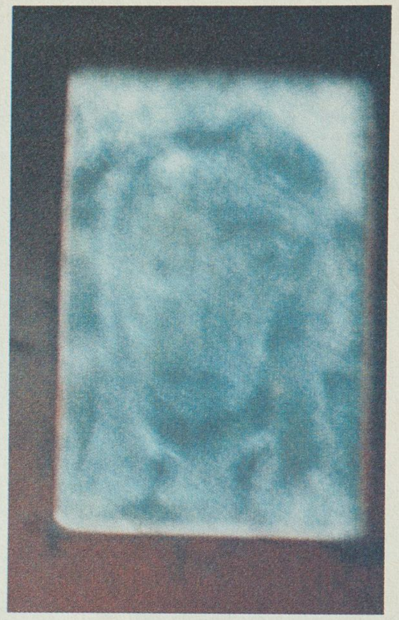
So how do the Flintshire phenomena rate? If we accept all the reported events at face value, we have a wide variety of them: ghosts, visions, faces, healing and other phenomena. As in other hauntings, the location may be significant. At this one there is a river which acts as an old boundary, the farmhouse where Rose-Mary lives being right beside it. The field is above the farmhouse, rising steeply from the river. There are numerous sites of antiquity close by and some intriguing place names. Earlier ghost reports from the valley exist, though these may be nothing more than folklore. Our hunch is that in this instance the place is somehow important in bringing the events into being; also, the central figure, Rose-Mary, may be the trigger for at least some of the events.

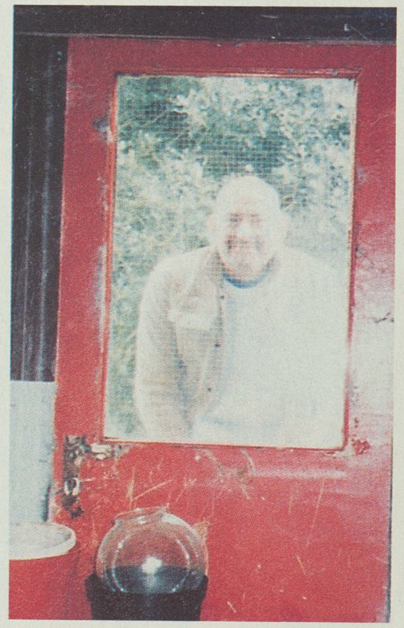
She experienced poltergeist phenomena at her childhood home in Guernsey, and she has seen a "black monk" figure just outside the farmhouse by the river/boundary. She saw a hazy figure in the field after the initial report and she is also the only person to have photographed faces on the shed windows. It was also she who found the stone with the face of the 'Blue Lady', and she has sometimes found inexplicable pools of water in the house. It is clear that Rose-Mary's presence acts as a catalyst.

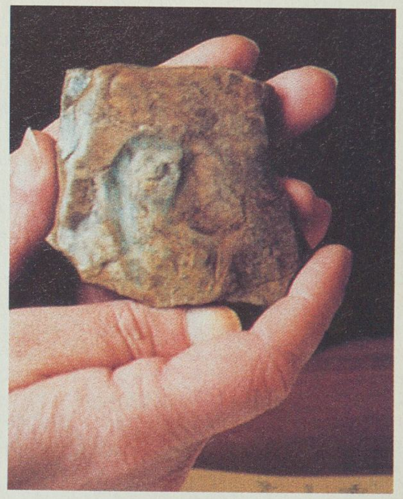
However, she certainly did not initiate the whole sequence of events and there may also be other pieces in this jigsaw, unknown factors which need to be considered. They could include things like electricity, magnetism, temperature, humidity and other intangibles – all kinds of things could be crucial. Once triggered – by the couple who saw the Virgin Mary in the field – the phenomenon took on a life of its own, feeding on the psychic energy of the place and the people involved. It is this psychic energy/supernatural force (whatever you care to call it) which is responsible for the healings experienced by visitors to the field. This scenario is as likely or unlikely as any other. An alternative possibility might be a trapped spirit (the faces? the ghosts?) trying to get help (the letters on the window?). Anyone can dream up their own scenario: the elusive nature of the phenomena make any of them impossible to prove.

So perhaps we should approach the events from another angle and concentrate more on the people involved. If it were not for them, the mystery would not exist. If the Irish couple had not written their letter claiming to have had a vision of the Virgin Mary, probably all we would have is sporadic poltergeist phenomena experienced by Rose-Mary in her farmhouse. The trigger event was seen through the eyes of Catholics and so automatically took on a Catholic form, with cures following. Then Rose-Mary happened to photograph the shed and saw faces in her photographs. If the eerie one shown here had not appeared, the faces could be disregarded as none of the others are at all clear and would not be visible if the photographs were reproduced here. 'Faces' can be found anywhere, once you start looking for them: we are programmed to recognise faces from birth. Faces are important to us as they are the focal point of the person through which we make contact. So we look out for them, and see them on rocks, in wood grain – anywhere. In this case the eerie face is the problematical one, for which we can find no easy solution. It is not caused by a person standing behind the window: the face completely fills the window frame, but a person standing in the same place is much smaller. If it were not for that face, most of the 'evidence' in this case could be disregarded by a sceptical investigator as illusory – the linking of coincidences and non-events to create something of significance.

So there are two extreme solutions to the mystery. Is it caused by supernatural forces breaking through at this special place, expressing themselves in all manner of strange events? Or are over-active human imaginations at work, seeing things that aren't really there and creating imaginary links between them? Perhaps future developments will help to solve this mystery. Until then, we can only watch and wait. ⓕ







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FIELD OF DREAMS: (Top left) People standing at the gate have had visions of the BVM at the crest of the hill. The shed at the left of the photo is where Rose-Mary took her pictures of faces (such as the one at top right) in the windows. While this eerie face fills the whole of the frame, someone actually standing outside (centre) is much smaller. (Bottom) The stone found by Rose-Mary which she believes shows the face of Mother Teresa.

senses
and sensibility

Imagine a world where you hear colours, see sounds and taste music. ANTONIO MELECHI guides us through a realm where the senses combine with surprising results. Illustrations by NICK DEWAR

While a fusion of the senses might outwardly suggest the delusions of a fevered imagination, or a case of physiologically crossed wires, the keynote of the experience of synæsthesia is invariably one of breakthrough rather than breakdown. It appears to lift the veil that separates us from the Plato's shimmering world of Ideals, exposing the object of perception in all its glorious essence. For synæsthetes that are, for example, able to experience a given musical note as flash of red and orange, not only does this form of magical perception come as second nature, it enlarges the capacity to be emotionally affected, to find pleasure, rapture and even divinity in the realm of the senses.

It is in relation to blindness and the ability to see sound that we find the first specific reference to the phenomenon of synæsthesia. The philosopher John Locke, writing in 1699, described the case of a congenitally blind man who "betrayed one day that he now understood what scarlet signified… it was like the sound of a trumpet." Soon afterwards, the English ophthalmologist Thomas Woodhouse reported the case of a man whose blindness had been compensated for by the gift of second sight, enabling him to hear sounds in coloured vision. Until the end of the 18th century, the medical discussion of synæsthesia remained limited to discussions of coloured hearing, oblivious to the ways in which *all* the senses were liable to converge.

The idea that the senses might be secretly connected, particularly through music and colour, had been a longstanding preoccupation of metaphysical philosophy and mystical religion.

According to Plato, the "music of the spheres" was said to be audible wherever there was harmony, so that the great works of art and architecture were perceived to communicate as much through music as they did line and colour. As the European scholars looked back to the Greeks in the Renaissance, this theme was elaborately developed by the Jesuit mathematician and musicologist Athanasius Kircher, who laid bare the implicit connections between colour and musical sound in his *Iter extaticum secundum*, devising a mathematical formula to link the frequency of sound and light.

taste

that

sound

Through the 18th century figures as diverse as Swedenborg and Goethe were also drawn to speculate on the correspondences between the senses, laying the philosophical ground for the 19th century French Symbolists such as Rimbaud and Mallarmé, whose poetry evoked and championed the possibility of expanded, synæsthetic perception.

This form of unified sensation had by the mid-century become an attainable reality, when hashish – the Orient's mythical inspirer of dreams and fancies – found its way into the artistic and literary milieu.

At the Club des Haschischins, co-founded by the psychiatrist J.J. Moreau de Tours and the poet and critic Theophile Gautier, hashish became well-known for its ability to fuel visions in which the senses were marvellously stirred and shaken.

In an account of hashish intoxication, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in the 1850s, Gautier described how he was able to miraculously perceive the "sound of colours: green, red, blue and yellow"; how "every object touched made a sound like a harmonica or æolian harp"; and, finally, how his body became a sponge to sounds, perfumes and light, which he absorbed in "streams of happiness".

Even Baudelaire – who was to ultimately deride the "sophisms" of hashish – could not help but be impressed by the drug's ability to fuse and expand the senses. In his essay *The Poem of Hashish*, Baudelaire evoked this visionary state of mind capable of revealing analogies and correspondences between the senses.

For the 19th century decadents, too, such altered perceptions augured the possibility of flight from the banality of life. In J.K. Husyman's novel *A Rebours*, the experiments of the disillusioned, aristocratic protagonist, Des Esseintes, lead to an exploration of all forms of atypical sensation, including synæsthesia. Indulging in a number of liqueurs and drinks, Des Esseintes experiences the delights of sensory fusion, finding curaçao to emit the shrill notes of a clarinet, kummel that of an oboe, kirsch the raw blast of the trumpet, and so on. Once intimate with this scheme of interrelated tones, Des Esseintes composed his own orchestral melodies, executing this enchanting music on his tongue.

touch
sound
taste
smell
sight

Beyond the literary pursuit of synæsthesia, real and imaginary, a union of the senses was at the end of the 19th century championed as the nadir of the æsthetic experience in art and music. Some of the period's experiments in coloured music were rather contrived attempts to translate the musical scale into light or smell – as with, for example, A Wallace Rimmington's colour organ, which projected the pre-given colours of a musical score onto a screen. However, composers such as Schoenberg and Alexander Scriabin undertook more serious experiments in synaesthetic music. In his symphony 'Prometheus: Poem of Fire', Scriabin was said to have employed a code which, linking notes, colour and shape, expressed his own personal synæsthesia.

Scriabin's contemporary and compatriot, the artist Wassily Kandinsky also attempted to employ synæsthetic techniques in his painting, aspiring to produce visible music – which he considered the most potent force for producing a spiritual vibration in the viewer – on canvas. In his book, *Reminiscences*, Kandinsky recalled how his brush was able to evoke musical sound through "the hiss of colours as they mingled."

Yet, while Scriabin and Kandinsky have been often described as synæsthetic artists, there appears little biographical evidence to suggest that either composer or painter were in truth blessed with this faculty. On closer examination, their respective experiments with this mode of mingled perception appears to owe more to philosophy than to genuine experience. The source of this preoccupation was for both almost certainly theosophy, the mystical teachings promoted by Madame Blavatsky, in which synæsthesia was heralded as a form of visionary insight into the noumenal world.

Renewed medical interest in coloured hearing and synæsthesia coincided with this period of artistic and philosophical speculation. In the late 19th and early 20th century, European journals of psychology and psychiatry profiled a significant number of synæsthetes and their exotic perceptions. Writing in 1889, the eminent French psychologist Binet observed that synæsthetes invariably showed a keenly developed æsthetic sensibility, being often professionally involved in the arts. Other commentators such as Solokov characterised the synæsthete as a glorified *idiot savant* whose heightened imagination masked an inability to think in abstract terms.

Two opposing theories sought to explain the causes of synæsthesia. The first and most simplistic argued that these anomalies of perception were essentially acts of mental association, so that, if we take the example of the synæsthete who felt himself swaying when smelling cod liver oil, it might have been contended that the smell of the oil subconsciously evoked the sea which, in turn, recalled the characteristic rocking motion of a boat. Alternatively, a second theory suggested that all synæsthesias were vestiges of a primitive mode of super-perception, in which the individual senses were not entirely differentiated.

The theory that synæsthesia might be best explained by quirks of physiology appeared to be borne out when researchers investigated the visionary effects of mescaline, the active alkaloid of the peyote cactus. They were able to chemically open the doors of perception, inducing a number of synæsthetic experiences. However, the organic basis of synæsthesia remained a mystery, and it was not until the 1950s, when the principal action of mescaline was localised in the synaptic pathways to the limbic region of the brain, that significant clues as to its causes began to emerge.

A remarkable aspect of this mescaline research was the revelation that synæsthesia might also function in relation to the neglected sixth sense, kinæsthesia, the body's awareness of its own *schema*. Volunteers under the influence of mescaline would often report feeling themselves physically transformed when subject to different sensations. "The barking of a dog," revealed one volunteer, "vibrated through my right foot. This was so distinct that I thought it necessary to identify the dog with my right foot." This sense of bodily mutation was echoed by other volunteers who reported feeling themselves becoming objects they touched or viewed. Others, on listening to music, were impelled to move, sometimes feeling directly puppeteered by rhythm and melody.

Perhaps the most famous testimony to the body's ability to be affected by the other senses is to be found in Aldous Huxley's account of his first mescaline experience, *The Doors of Perception*. Under the influence of the drug, Huxley found himself in a revitalised world whose resplendent clarity and depth transformed everyday objects – chairs, flowers, books, the folds of his trousers – into the "divinely other". In this beatific vision, Huxley's sense of psychological and physical identity was deeply rent, his subjectivity lost, becoming a bodiless 'Not-I' subsumed to the objects which monopolised his attentions.

THE MEMORY MAN (OR THE MAN WHO COULDN'T FORGET)

One of the best-documented and most fascinating cases of synaesthesia is that of S V Shereshevskii, the Russian memory-artist whose multi-sensory memory was studied over four decades by the neurologist A L Luria.

In the mid 1920s, while working as a journalist for a Moscow newspaper, Shereshevskii's remarkable photographic recall came into its own, and his editor brought him to the attention of Dr Luria, who had begun to examine the neurology of memory and amnesia.

In the course of comprehensive tests, Shereshevskii was asked to memorise countless lists of words, symbols, formulas, musical motifs and nonsense words, which he would unerringly reproduce, eyes closed, his finger tracing imaginary outlines. Luria quickly found that a capacity for direct visualisation was the *modus operandi* of Shereshevskii's prodigious memory. Thus, if Shereshevskii was given a sequence of words to remember, these would be imagined on a blackboard written in his own handwriting. Similarly, if given a list of words, Shereshevskii would picture them at points on an imaginary walk from Pushkin Square to Gorky Street. With abstract equations, a more complex technique allowed Shereshevskii to build associations between symbols and everyday objects, which were then incorporated into unlikely narratives.

While some aspects of his prolific recall were certainly based on techniques Shereshevskii himself developed as he took his memory act onto the stage, his inherent ability to fix information in visible space was without doubt due to his synæsthesia. He said: "I recognize a word not only by the images it evokes, but by a whole complex of feelings that image arouses. It is hard to express… it's not a matter of vision or hearing but some overall sense I get. Usually I experience a word's taste and weight. I don't have to make an effort to remember it; the word seems to recall itself. But it's difficult to describe. What I sense is something oily slipping through my hand… or I'm aware of a slight ticking in my left hand caused by a mass of tiny, lightweight points. When this happens, I simply remember, without having to make the attempt."

While Shereshevskii's synæsthesia led him to experience – and remember – all aspects of sensory information in extraordinary detail, it also created confusion. Since the sounds of words conjured images in his mind, these were often at odds with their referents. The Russian word for pig (*svinia*), for example, was for him delicate and suggestive, evoking qualities rarely associated with the animal. Also, the peculiarities of his synæsthesia were liable to stall his memory. If a familiar person happened to be dressed in an outfit that Shereshevskii had never before seen, or if they demonstrated a new gesture or expression, this new information could produce sensations that would lead him to forget temporarily who they were. Similarly, noises such as a cough or sneeze could briefly cloud his visual imagination when in the act of remembering. For all its complexity, Shereshevskii's memory was easily distracted and foiled.

Besides its sheer breadth, the most incredible aspect of Shereshevskii's synæsthetic memory was its longevity. Examined by Luria after periods of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years, the neurologist found that he was not just able to recall all the information that he had ever been given, but to also add a wealth of incidental detail concerning the context in which the tests had been set, the weather, what Luria was wearing, etc.

In many respects, Shereshevskii was simply unable to forget. While he exploited this ability to its fullest in his stage career, becoming a repository of vast quantities of inconsequential information, he was haunted by personal memories. Events that he would have gladly seen dulled by the patina of time were unremittingly clear, losing nothing of their emotional intensity.

While Huxley's rapture was linked to his sense of expanded vision, the medium perhaps most generally responsible for such ecstasy is music. The physical impact of music upon the body has been observed by many commentators; for instance, it has been rarely felt as acutely as it was by Friedrich Nietzsche, who was deeply sensitive to the way in which his favourite music was able to "lift the body" and "accelerate the animal functions".

If such affects are to some extent experienced in moments of musical joy, there are other more unusual varieties of musical synæsthesia which rouse the body directly into movement, requiring it to assume different positions on hearing different sounds. This strange confabulation of the physical and musical was so developed in one synæsthete, that he claimed to find F sharp major was the only position he was able to sleep in. Though such experiences are extremely rare, the physical affect of music might well be the most commonly experienced and least reported of all the synæsthesias. Music's capacity to move, uplift, transport and carry away might, then, be understood as literal descriptions of its synæsthetic power.

The notion that synæsthesia is, at root, a normal brain function whose workings are registered in the consciousness of very few individuals is the conclusion the American neurologist Richard E. Cytowic reaches in *The Man Who Tasted Shapes*. Beginning his research in the late 1970s, Cytowic has undertaken the most comprehensive study of the psychology and physiology of the multi-sensory experience to date. Synæsthesia, he suggests, is physiologically linked with the limbic system of the left hemisphere, and triggered by imbalances in the cortex which cause the 'disconnections' that are experienced as mixed-up perceptions. However, unlike migraine – which Cytowic regards as its physiological cousin – synæsthesia is invariably pleasurable and often ecstatic. Cytowic suggests that the hippocampus, the 'emotional' centre of the temporal lobe, might somehow be involved in producing these positive affects.

"In synesthesia," Cytowic writes, "a brain process that is normally unconscious becomes bared to consciousness so that synesthetes know they are synesthetic while the rest of us do not." Echoing previous theories, Cytowic argues that this multi-sensory awareness has over time been slowly eradicated from consciousness. For this reason he calls synæsthetes "cognitive fossils", regarding them as throwbacks to a primitive mode of perception which has somehow bypassed the utilitarian imperative for the senses to provide information over emotion.

Synæsthesia can, in theory, assume thirty basic forms based on couplings of the six senses (visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, kinæsthetic), though certain combinations are predominant. The visual-auditory and the kinæsthetic-auditory are perhaps most common, while others such as the auditory-visual or the olfactory-tactile are hardly ever reported. In the description of these synæsthesias, the first term refers to the imagery experience and the second the stimulus experience. Thus, the classic visual-auditory synæsthesia designates the ability to perceive images when hearing sounds, that is to see sounds.

hear
that
colour

Beyond these two-fold synæsthesias, there are more complex amalgamations which can involve three sense modalities. For instance, one volunteer in a mescaline experiment described seeing accordion music as a series of spirals and cones into which he felt himself immediately transformed.

The incidence of synæsthesia has been much disputed. Separate studies conducted over 50 years ago by Karkowski and Seashore claimed that the phenomenon of coloured-hearing manifested itself in one and 60 per cent of their respective survey groups. More recently, the neurologist Richard E. Cytowic estimates that the synæsthete belongs to a minority of around one in 100,000.

The staggering discrepancy can, to some extent, be put down to shifting definitions. If synæsthesia is seen to include the ability to consciously link the senses so that, for example, the scenes which a piece of music suggests can be directly imaged in the mind's eye, it is certainly not an uncommon gift. If perceptions such as these are rightly excluded, on the grounds that they are conscious and voluntary, synæsthesia remains a psychological rarity.

Some researchers have suggested that children are far more disposed to experience synæsthesia than adults. If evidence could be marshalled to justify the claim, it would suggest that a natural slippage between the sense modalities is effectively contained by language and social convention.

Synæsthesia might, then, represent the return of the repressed, being the ghost of a naive, primitive mode of sensory experience. It might well represent a carnivalesque reprieve, a feast of the senses, in which consciousness scratches its rational surface, re-discovering a wild, primordial beach beneath its neatly-paved byways.

POETRY IN MOTION

The Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov, one of this century's few genuinely synæsthetic writers, shared with his mother the faculty of coloured hearing. In his autobiography *Speak Memory*, Nabokov describes the colours which the letter-sounds always conjured for him: "The long 'a' of the English alphabet… has for me the tint of weathered wood, but a French 'a' evokes polished ebony. The black group also includes… hard 'g' (vulcanized rubber) and 'r' (a sooty rag being ripped)."

These spontaneous connections between sound and colour were exactly what the French Symbolists of the 19th century had strained to achieve in their prose and poetry. Arthur Rimbaud, for example, in his poem 'Les Voyelles', wrote of A as black, E as white, I as red, U as green and O as blue.

While Nabokov inherited his gift for synæsthetic hearing from his mother, – and perceived many of the same sound-colour combinations as her – there were substantial differences between mother and son. This was particularly evident in Nabokov's response to music. Not only did he fail to be visually affected by melody, music was incapable of rousing any significant emotion in him, experiencing it as little more than "an arbitrary succession of more or less irritating sounds."

FEEL THE NOISE: While letter-sounds could evoke great emotion in Nabokov, he was irritated by music.

RESOURCES

Relatively little has been published on the topic of synæsthesia, especially in English. The following books and articles will satisfy anyone who wishes to explore the subject further:

M. Critchley, 'Ecstatic and Synaesthetic Experiences during Musical Perception' in M Critchley and R A Henson (eds) *Music and the Brain* (Heinemann, London,1980)
R E Cytowic, *A Union of the Senses* (Springer Verlag, New York. 1989); *The Man Who Tasted Shapes* (Abacus, London, 1996)
A R Luria, *Mind of a Mnemonist* (Basic Books, New York, 1968)
C S Myers, 'A case of synæsthesia' in *British Journal of Psychology* (4:228-238)
L Simpson and P Mckellar. 'Types of synæsthesia' in the *Journal of Mental Science* (100:422) 1955
E M Von Hornbostel, 'Unity of the senses' in *Psyche* (7:83-89)

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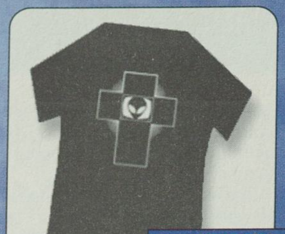

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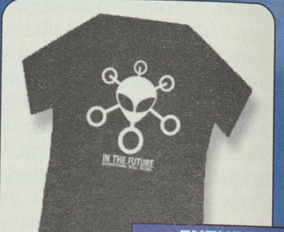

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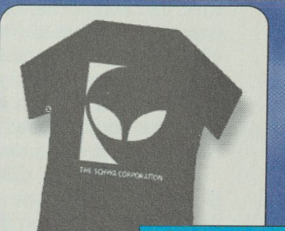

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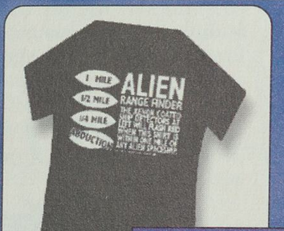

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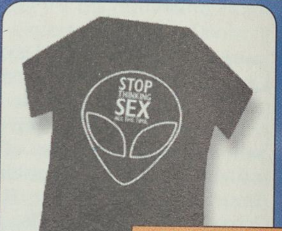

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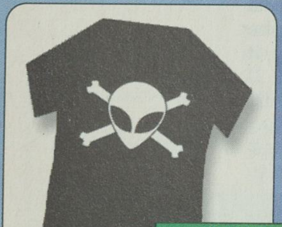

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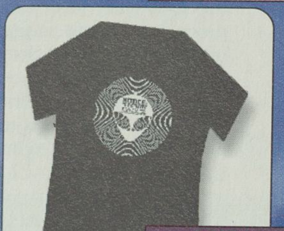

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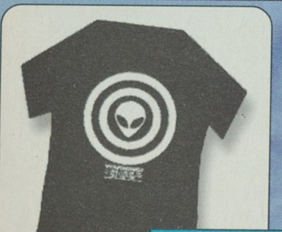

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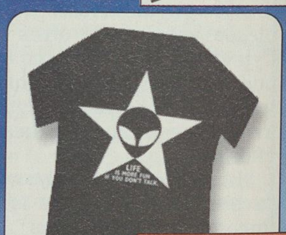

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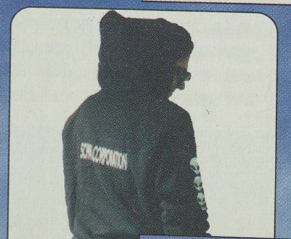

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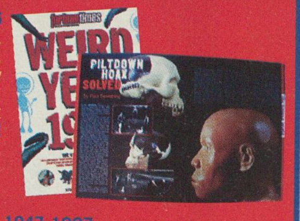

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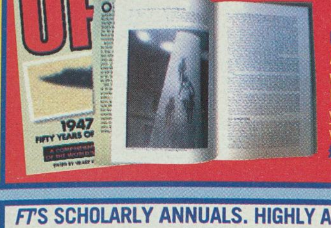

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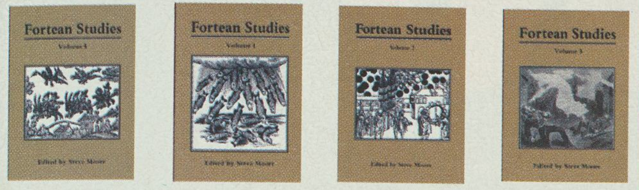

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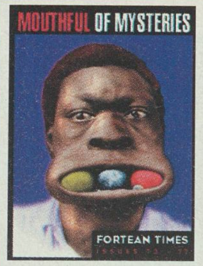

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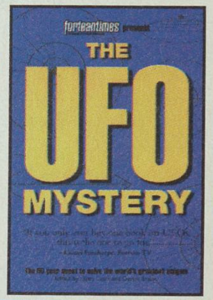

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RADIO

PHIL BOND

FORGET ALIEN ABDUCTEES FOR A MOMENT; THEIR CONTEMPORARY COUNTERPARTS – THE WAVIES – BELIEVE THEY ARE HARASSED AND ABDUCTED BY THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT. SID QUE (WHO HAS REQUESTED ANONYMITY) FOUND HIS JOURNEY TO UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPERIENCES TOOK HIM INTO A DISTURBING REGION WHERE CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY MINGLES WITH POST COLD WAR PARANOIA. PHOTOS BY ALEX HOWE

For years the relentless voices in Carl Campbell's head told him what to do and so on a Sunday night in May 1991, the fed-up 27-year-old left his home in Manchester, Georgia. All the way to Washington, D C he was followed by visions of snakes, stalked by images of being run over by trains. Carrying the modest monthly allowance that his mother gave him, the pathetic young man's bus ride took one day. By Monday he had found a hotel. By Thursday, he was at the Pentagon, demanding to see General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Turned away at the door, Campbell – who believed he had been implanted with a mind-controlling computer chip by the Central Intelligence Agency – returned to the Pentagon parking lot where he saw a uniformed officer boarding a nondescript Defence Department bus. Enraged by his belief that he was a victim of a government-sponsored mind control, Campbell pulled out a semi-automatic handgun and shot Commander Edward J. Higgins – a 21-year Navy veteran and specialist in US-Soviet arms control – five times in the chest and abdomen. Higgins died at Washington Hospital Center, a victim of what federal investigators said was a random shooting.

the voices told him what to do

Fifteen months later, at 6:00am, Thursday, 3 September 1992, 48-year-old Marsha Papageorge was walking along a railroad near her Silver Spring, Maryland home when, for some reason known only to herself, she abruptly turned and walked into an oncoming CSX freight train. "The engineer did everything he could to stop the train," said a spokesman for CSX. Papageorge, who suffered from "periods of confusion," according to the *Washington Post*, was crushed. A newspaper, wrapped in plastic, was the only item found near the body.

Except for the presence of trains – imagined in Campbell's case, all-too-real in Papageorge's case – these tragedies, seemingly, have little in common. With mental hospitals discharging patients in an effort to 'mainstream' them, the crazies seem to be everywhere. It's old news. Old news, that is, to everyone but a growing band of self-

HEAD

DIGITAL MANIPULATION: ETIENNE GILFILLAN

proclaimed mind control victims in the US who assert that the CIA and the Defence Department are engaged in a highly selective and effective project of directed-energy mind control experimentation. They call it "microwave harassment" and 'they' are the Wavies.

Just who are the Wavies and what can explain their bizarre claims? They are armed with valid scientific findings and obscure journal articles; they know that those researchers who have attempted to study them are ostracised and blackballed. In particular, they are energised by a blistering screed from a CIA-trained military officer, Julianne McKinney – who has since vanished. The Wavies may soon replace alien abductees in the public imagination.

"I am getting more and more calls," reports Harlan Girard, author of a paper on the effect of gigahertz radiation on the human nervous system, presented at a NATO workshop in 1991. "They were coming in at one a month. Now it is two a month. It is quite a burden because it takes a good day to listen to people and call back the person who has referred them and take notes. Years ago it would take a long time for people to make connections. But now with the Internet, the cases are coming in faster and faster."

With the Internet cases are coming in much faster

The Wavies have taken to the Internet to keep in touch. Indeed, attention to this movement is accelerating; in September 1996, America Online began devoting a 'channel' it calls Parascope to mind control experimentation and, in an academic journal, a recent article by a respected neuroscientist claims that "a potential has emerged which was improbable but which is now marginally feasible… the potential to… influence directly the major portion of the approximately six billion brains of the human species."

"I know a woman who says Julianne saved her life," says Girard, a colleague of McKinney's. "She made an enormous contribution just having a document on the Internet that has spawned a wealth of interest."

"Julianne spent all of her money on her organisation," recalls a victim. "It folded because of lack of funds. I hope that she works on it again. She is very independent and quite a strong person and did a lot for victims. I am sorry that she folded."

"I am someone who I guess could be termed a 'Manchurian Candidate'," says another victim, a 46-year-old Colorado man with a degree in Electrical Engineering and a family. "I sought both psychiatric and medical help, to no avail. Through the Internet I found Ms McKinney's articles and have since discovered an informal support group for people like me. I called her just about the time she was shutting down her operation."

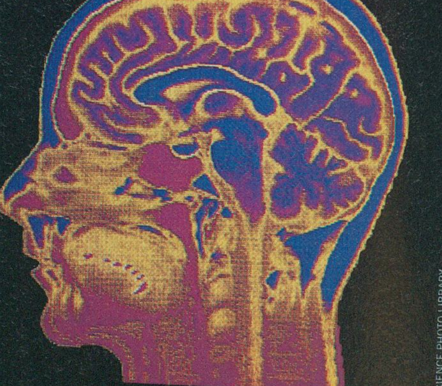
To many, McKinney has the status of a saviour. According to Girard, her 16-year career with the US Army ended in the early 1990s. Apparently, she received training by the Central Intelligence Agency and began contacting people who claimed to be mind control victims. She formed an organisation called the Electronic Surveillance Project (ESP), based in the Washington D C offices of the Association of National Security Alumni. When the Association lost its lease, she moved the operation to her apartment. In December 1992, Julianne used her Army retirement bonus – which she took in lieu of a pension – to publish 3,000 copies of her 11,000-word tract *Microwave Harassment and Mind Control Experimentation*, many copies of which she mailed free of charge to subscribers to the Association's newsletter, *Unclassified*.

"She spent a huge amount of time researching it, writing it and deliberating over its production values. The bottom line is that she blew her whole government bonus on helping other human beings. She sent copies out for free in the beginning. She made an enormous sacrifice," said Girard, who marvelled that a friend in Bordeaux, France, could access the tract on the Internet. "It was the third entry that his search engine gave him while looking under 'mind control'."

McKinney's tract provides a harrowing list of the living nightmares experienced by mind control victims, including: the use of informants (usually of the opposite sex); the misuse of covert intelligence personnel; recurrent confrontations by unusually hostile strangers; entries into residences (usually while a victim is sleeping or away); rapidly deteriorating health (usually of a digestive nature); sleep disruption or deprivation; vandalism of privately-owned vehicles; staged accidents; the isolation of individuals from their families; and progressive financial impoverishment compounded by the disruption of employment.

"The majority of those in contact with ESP – educated, white collar professionals – have lost their jobs," wrote McKinney. "Termination of employment in many of these cases involved prefatory harassment by the employers and co-workers, which coincided with other forms of harassment."

At times, the description of harassment seems comic and all-to-familiar to city dwellers who might never realise that the nuisances in their lives might be due to government harassment. Take, for example, the ultimate low-tech form of harassment, door slamming. "Door slamming is… a popular pastime, particularly in apartment buildings," McKinney noted. "One individual reported that, during a peak period of harassment, the neighbour across the hall began entering and leaving his apartment every 10 minutes, slamming his door loudly on each occasion. This was a daily occurrence, encompassing periods of several hours, over a period of several months. It apparently served to trigger a door-slamming chain reaction on the part of neighbours both on that floor and on the floors immediately above and below. When our contact politely asked her immediate neighbour to close his door more quietly, he slammed the door in her face."



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Noisy – and nosey – neighbours aside, the harassment that follows these individuals culminates in some form of thought induction, sometimes through microwaves. For the victims, it is like getting crank phone calls in the head at all hours; anonymous, threatening, repetitive, and no caller ID. "This is a global fascist movement involving major multinational corporations, persons within the broad spectrum of government agencies world-wide (with emphasis being on the military), satanic cults, academic researchers who are bypassing restrictions on involuntary human experimentation, BIG money and a number of other things. You are just a drop in the bucket where experimentation is concerned," McKinney told one victim.

Microwave emitters, according to McKinney's victims, are concealed, for example, in false-front upright pianos. One victim noted that all of her neighbours had identical upright pianos in their homes, not one of which was ever played.

Other victims noted oversized stereo speakers that were never used, microwave ovens in living rooms (not kitchens), oversized briefcases, emergency medical service vehicles that, when followed, departed the neighbourhood in a high speed chase.

The complaints of micro-wave harassment are chilling. Their uncompromising tone and lack of corroborating evidence quickly leads one to dismiss them as paranoid rants. But if conspiracy theories have at least a germ of conspiracy fact, what are the facts behind 'audiogrammic' microwave communications?

Recently, Dr. James C Lin wrote: "I have heard these microwave-transmitted signals in different ways, including as clicks and musical tones." Lin – author of *Microwave Auditory Effects and Applications* and a researcher at the University of Illinois – was contacted by McKinney some years ago. His name constantly crops up in the literature of microwave harassment, surely to his chagrin. "I have not attempted myself [to determine] if I can hear human speech. I think it is possible to send an intelligible signal. But I cannot tell you what a person would think in their own mind about the origination of signals."

The conspiracy literature abounds

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microwaves in the UK

Are the Wavies a US phenomenon? **Leigh Neville**, co-editor of the UK conspiracy theory monitoring periodical *Immerse* (http://www.haywire.co.uk/immerse), summarises some claims of mind control.

Microwave (MW) harassment and mind control (MC) experimentation in the UK and Europe lack the advocacy groups and large numbers of alleged survivors of America, but lack little else. Mind control is alive and well on this side of the Atlantic.

In fact, one of the most publicised cases of MW/MC is that of Swede Robert Naeslund. Since a 1960 operation in a Stockholm hospital, Naeslund has suffered from both RHIC (radio hypnotic intracerebral control) implants and targeted microwave radiation. Due to interference by SAPO, the Swedish security service, Naeslund claims no Swedish surgeon would operate on the implants and so he travelled to Indonesia in an attempt to get help. The operation by doctors at the St Carolus Hospital, Djakarta, was halted midway, apparently at the behest of the CIA. Naeslund's attempts to gain publicity for his cause has only resulted in an increase in what he terms 'electromagnetic terrorism'.

Possibly the best known case in the UK was that of the Greenham Common peace protestors. Female activists, concerned by the deployment of US nuclear weapons on British soil, staged a non-violent protest around the perimeter fences of the Greenham USAF base beginning in 1981. During 1984, the first Cruise tactical nuclear missiles arrived at the base and the situation heated up in more ways than one. Protestors complained of severe headaches, temporary paralysis, nausea, palpitations and other classic symptoms of microwave poisoning. Tests revealed microwave radiation up to 100 times greater than background readings taken around the base.

MISSILES MEAN MASS MURDER
WANT TO LIVE

COMMON CAUSE: Were the women of Greenham Common targeted by microwave harrassment?

POPPERFOTO

Microwave harassment also seems to have contributed to the deaths of 25 defence scientists variously employed by Marconi Underwater and Defence Systems, Easems, Plessey and GEC. The spate of unconventional deaths and surprise suicides of many of the victims in the mid-1980s (see ***FT49:14***) led researchers such as Tony Collins, author of the acclaimed book *Open Verdict*, to consider the possibility of mind control. Most of the dead worked on highly sensitive electronic warfare programmes for NATO and the US military, including the Strategic Defence Initiative. It is claimed that directed energy weapons may have been used to literally drive these men to suicide and 'accidents'.

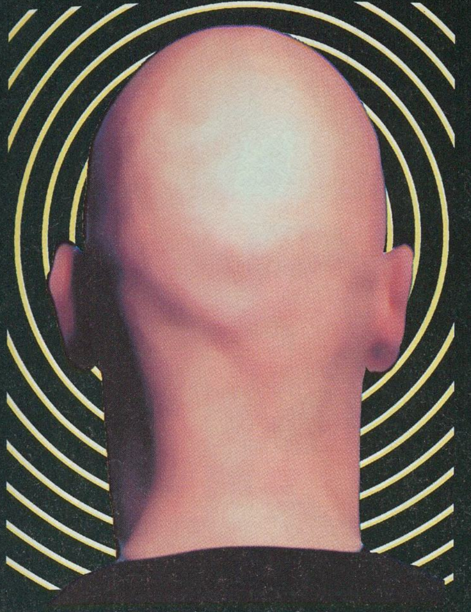
Joe Vialls' case was first reported in *Open Verdict*, but has since developed to more conspiratorial proportions. Vialls, a former RAF engineer, worked on a sensitive oil drilling operation in India in 1983 when the microwave harassment began. It seems Vialls had been unwittingly involved in an industrial espionage operation allegedly masterminded by the CIA. Vialls suffered from both microwave radiation and post hypnotic suggestions .

Vialls was treated by the London-based Medical Foundation for the Care of Torture Victims (MFCTV) who found they had "no hesitation" in declaring that Mr Vialls would be extremely susceptible to clandestine hypnosis and to post hypnotic suggestions of the kinds described in his statements. In statements made to *Lobster* editor Robin Ramsay, Vialls now believes he was programmed to kill WPC Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan Peoples' Bureau in London, 1984. According to Ramsay, Vialls says he fired on the policewoman from the office of the Hughes Tool Company, a firm long linked to the CIA.

with microwaves stories. For instance, in the 1960s, the Soviets bathed the US Embassy in Moscow with microwaves and may have beamed microwaves to the State of Oregon in the 1970s. And yet, Lin's reticence to speculate on this phenomenon is not uncommon. Indeed, an analysis of the literature finds only tantalising hints that the technology of high-quality audiogram transmission is real. According to Wavie-advocate Judy Wall, "the first, and perhaps only, officially reported experiment documenting a case of synthetic telepathy cannot be found in the literature" primarily because of national security concerns.

Wall summarises the experiment this way: in 1961, Allen Frey, a freelance biophysicist and engineering psychologist, reported that humans can hear microwaves, but this discovery was dismissed by most United States scientists as being the result of outside noise. Frey's experiment found that human subjects exposed to 1310 MHz and 2982 MHz microwaves at average power densities of 0.4 to 2 mW/cm2 (microwatts per cubic centimetre) perceived auditory sensations described as buzzing or knocking sounds. The sensation occurred instantaneously and appears to originate within or near the back of the head.

In 1975, researcher A W Guy stated that "one of the most widely observed and accepted biologic effects of low average power electromagnetic energy is the auditory sensation evoked in man when exposed to pulsed microwaves." He concluded that at frequencies where the auditory effect can easily be detected, microwaves penetrate deep into the tissues of the head, causing rapid thermal expansion (at the microscopic level) which produces strains in the brain tissue. An acoustic stress wave is then conducted through the skull to the cochlea and, from there, it proceeds in the same manner as in conventional hearing.



Also in 1975, Don Justesen, while working at the Laboratories of Experimental Neuropsychology at the Veterans Administration Hospital, Kansas City, Missouri, reported that Guy had his father, a skilled telegrapher, send messages in Morse code via the microwave auditory method. Most startling, in the same paper, is Justesen's report that Joseph Sharp and Mark Grove actually heard microwave-transmitted words. They had recorded on tape the spoken words for the numbers one through ten and focused these voice-modulated microwaves on themselves. "The sounds heard were not unlike those emitted by persons with artificial larynxes," according to Justesen.

Justesen stated that further experimentation with more complex speech was not attempted because no one knew how much microwave radiation a human could safely take. Wall reports that "receiverless radio" was not adequately publicised or explained because of national security concerns. "Sharp and Grove were in the employ of the US Government," concludes Wall, "which undoubtedly told them to keep their mouths shut about the experiment."

"Julianne is a fighter," says her friend Girard. "She was attracted to people like herself. When people called her who didn't have that inner resilience she gave them short shrift... wrote them off as whiners and complainers." Apparently the whiners and complainers got to her, as did the financial hardship of running an organisation on personal savings. In the fall of 1995, she packed her bags and left Washington. "For financial reasons, I am in the process of closing up shop where this Project is concerned," she wrote to a victim in mid-1995. "I do not intend to leave a forwarding address with the Post Office when I depart this area." Since then, all efforts to find her have failed, although she is believed to be alive.

Without their benefactor, the Wavies are in limbo: terrified, ostracised, and a danger to themselves and to the public. They await an advocate to take their cause as psychiatrist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Mack championed the alien abductees. The Wavies have no John Mack – yet.

While they wait, some tentative conclusions can be reached about the nature of the phenomenon. It is clear that the Internet is both bane and bonanza to *'X-File'* situations like microwave harassment. As the World Wide Web creates electronic tribes that share similar views, the speed and ease with which information can be disseminated assures that rumours and lies will jostle with legitimate data in cyberspace. "On the Net, information flows rapidly and is impossible to verify." observes Thomas Porter, a Winston-Salem, NC, software engineer and author of a Website entitled 'Government Research into ESP and Mind Control'. "Anonymous rumours can be inserted into the datastream easily," Porter continues. "Paranoia about poisoned sources can quickly overtake a researcher. As a topic for serious discussion on the Net, ufology seems to have self-destructed; mind control may be next. The Net's greatest value remains that of a pointer to other sources... potential interviews, journals and, yes, even books."

But even "poisoned sources" – whether inserted into the public discourse digitally or through the printed page – can still serve a useful purpose in a free society by focusing attention and getting people to talk. The lesson for the 21st century is that the electronic tribes created by the Internet – whose compatibility is based on like-mindedness, not shared geography – will be spreading rumours and inaccuracies at the speed of light, but that this Tower of electronic Babel is a good thing. As John Stuart Mill observed, a century ago, heated agreement is both tempting and dangerous to a free society. Truth needs Babel.

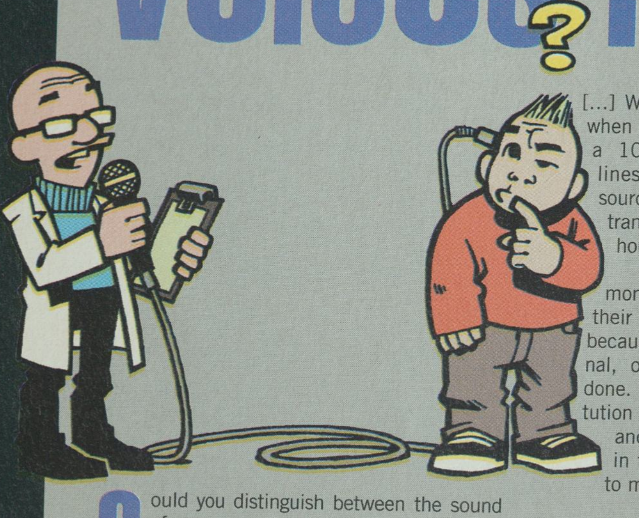
What is more conducive to the idea of conspiracy is when the authorities, in government and academia, handle anomalous phenomena and behaviour with evasion. Dr Elizabeth Rauscher recalls the forces of resistance that came from On High during her own research into the Wavies' complaints. "In trying to help these people, I got in tremendous trouble. I was told by some people in Washington that I could not publish my research that I funded with my own money at my own place – and was told I would be blackballed if I did. At the time I did not report much of what I did, but I was blackballed anyway! I am thinking to myself 'This is crazy! Where is the Constitution in this thing?'"

Meanwhile, the Wavies still flee from crank calls in their heads. "I can keep silent and avoid embarrassment, ridicule and disbelief," says victim Dorothy Burdick. "A policeman told me to ignore it. A security man told me that my life could be made hell on Earth. The main inventor, a physicist, told me it was impossible. The whole thing may be simply a combination of laser communication and artificial intelligence, which I doubt. Regardless of what it is, all Americans can be reached anywhere at anytime doing anything without attachments and wires. Communications have come at least that far."

And on the Internet, one can find a catalogue from Consumertronics, an Alamogordo, New Mexico, firm that sells survivalist electronic gear. For $1,395, the company will sell you "a ultra-high gain, ultra-low noise and distortion brainwave (and other biologic signals) amplifier coupled to a powerful and effective, yet highly directional, EM transmitter – an absolute must for all serious students and practitioners of Psychic Mind Control Lab, Weaponry and Countermeasures applications. The Range is about 100 meters." The company asks the enticing question: "Ever want to forcibly, yet secretly, project your thoughts into other people or animals? Just pause to consider what you could do if you had that power right now!" ft

It's Like Getting Crank Phone Calls in the Head

Voices? in my Head



PHIL BOND

Could you distinguish between the sound of your own spoken voice, your own internal, unspoken thoughts, and a voice inserted into your brain via microwaves?

Dr James C Lin says that a microwave signal, perceived in the brain as a sound, should 'sound' significantly different from our own voices, spoken or internalised. "A normal person should have no difficulty knowing that when he is talking, it is his own voice. If a microwave signal is being transmitted and received, then my experience is that there should be no difficulty distinguishing between the two." Assuming that inserted voices are heard – and assuming further that some of these people are not nuts – there are three schools of thought as to what is happening to them:

POWER UP!

This theory suggests that some Wavies are suffering real interference effects from local electrical sources, but they are not necessarily microwave-induced. Dr ElizabethRauscher has concluded that many people are affected by the ebb and flow of electrical power lines. "I usually start open-minded and investigate [looking out for] anything anomalous. I am also conservative enough to wonder if the person might be crazy," she says.

Rauscher – who holds degrees in physics, chemistry and nuclear engineering, and a doctorate in nuclear science – speculates that the voices some people hear may occur when there is a 'mix-up' between their unconscious and conscious selves at times of electromagnetic (EM) power surges.

She gives the example of a woman at Fort Bragg who claimed there were lights in her head. "She sounded crazy, but she was right [...] We measured her brain waves and when she reported [the light] there was a 10-100-fold surge in the power lines." Investigation revealed the source of the surges was a defective transformer buried in front of her house, used each night by loggers.

Rauscher's own programme of monitoring people for such effects in their homes had to be discontinued because of its cost. "I wish more rational, open-minded research would be done. But, you see, almost every institution that does the research is biased and finds no effects. There is money in finding no effects. No one wants to move power lines."

PRISONER'S DILEMMA

A second theory, supported by some of the Wavies themselves, is that the government is actively testing new tools of war on an unsuspecting public. As Alvin Toffler noted in *War and Anti-War* (1993), in an overpopulated world of loose national borders, the mission of the 21st century military will be a one of global crowd control.

Infrasound generators are part of a growing list of weaponry exotic enough to make Buck Rogers stun-gun himself to see if he was dreaming. This includes: biological biodegrading microbes, chemical irritants, adhesives ('stickums'), anti-traction ('slickums'), binding agents, combustion modifiers, metal embrittlements, odiferous agents, non-nuclear electromagnetic pulses, particle beams, high intensity sound, stun guns, non-penetrating projectiles, low-energy lasers, strobe lights, holographs, voice cloning and high powered microwaves.

With the millions of dollars being pumped into such weapons, it is important to question the methodology behind the testing in research and development. This point is strengthened by the recent admissions of the US Government that Americans were unwittingly used in radiation experiments during the cold war. How, where, and upon whom – the Wavies ask – are these high-tech nightsticks being tested?

Dr C B Scot Jones of the Human Potential Foundation thinks that prisoners are particularly vulnerable to secret testing. "Think!" he says, "If someone or some group wanted to monitor the movement of a person... if they wanted to be able to observe them 24 hours a day, who would they choose?" An ex-Naval Intelligence officer and ex-aide to Senator Clairborne Pell (D-Rhode Island), Jones said: "Of course, we'd get letters on everything, but one group sticks out in my mind – letters from prisoners who claimed they were being mind controlled. They would say 'I think I am a guinea pig in some sort of mind control experiment and I am pissed [angry]'. They claimed they heard voices."

21ST CENTURY-SENSITIVES

Darker than the prisoner's dilemma is a vision of a dreadful new era of official surveillance and control that the Wavies fear is coming about. They think that their experiences presage something worse and point to several curious precedents. In the late 1896-7, six years before man flew for the first time at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, farmers and urban dwellers throughout the West and Midwest claimed they saw self-propelled airships crossing the sky with bearded human pilots. Just a few years before the implantation of microchips, such as Destron IDI, became routine in pets in the early 1960s, people claimed they were abducted by aliens and implanted with chips to track their movements. Modern abductees claim they are subject to bizarre medical treatments – usually for the purpose of creating hybrids – and this heralds the Human Genome Project, which will revolutionise biology allowing the creation of God-knows-what creatures.

Could it be that, in a world of accelerated cultural and technological change, a certain portion of the population is unusually sensitive to the new technologies that are appearing on the horizon? Are the Wavies ahead of their time in this regard?

It might already be too late. Last year, Canadian neuroscientist Dr Michael Persinger – a pioneer researcher into the effect of EM fields on the human body – suggested, in an issue of *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, that it is feasible that any human brain could be tapped into using current technology. "The historical emergence of such possibilities, which have ranged from gunpowder to atomic fission, have resulted in major changes in social evolution that occurred quite quickly after implementation," Persinger warns. "Reduction of the risk of inappropriate application of these technologies requires the continued and open discussion of their realistic feasibility and implications within the scientific and public domain."

FURTHER READING

Robert O Becker, *The Body Electric: Electromagnetism and the Foundation of Life* (Murrow, 1985).
Tony Collins, *Open Verdict* (Sphere, 1990).
Alex Constantine, *Psychic Dictatorship in the USA* (Feral House, 1995); *Virtual Government*, (Feral House, 1997).
Jim Keith, ed., *Secret and Suppressed* (Feral House, 1994); *Mind Control World Control:The Encyclopedia of Mind Control* (Adventures Unlimited Press, 1998).
James C Lin, *Electromagnetic Interaction with Biological Systems* (Plenum Press, 1989).
John Marks, *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate:The CIA and Mind Control* (McGraw Hill, 1980).
Alvin Toffler, *War and Anti War* (Little Brown, 1993).
John White, ed., *Psychic Warfare:Fact or Fiction? An Investigation Into the Use of the Mind as a Military Weapon* (Aquarian Press, 1988).

WEB RESOURCES

MIND CONTROL FORUM
http://www.mk.net/~mcf/
Regularly updated survivor accounts and news.

MIND NET INDEX
http://www.mk.net/~mcf/mind_net/mnindex.htm
Exceptional collection of research papers and articles related to mind control and harassment including authors such as Julianne McKinney.

MICROWAVE HARASSMENT VICTIMS
http://www.mk.net/~stratus/

PSYCHOTRONIC WEAPONS
http://www.sightings.com/political/weapons/psychotr.htm

LEADING EDGE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH GROUP
http://www.trufax.org/main7.html

COVERT WEAPON TESTING ON INNOCENTS
http://netaccess.on.ca/~raven1/raven1.htm

DISINFORMATION
http://www.disinfo.com
The Disinformation search engine. All shades of conspiracy, millennial tension, cults, magick and HP Lovecraft!

THE KONFORMIST
http://www.konformist.com
Robalini's brilliant site covering all manner of conspiratorial skullduggery.

STEAMSHOVEL PRESS
http://www.umsl.edu/~skthoma/
A primary source for modern conspiracy overview.

Also, readers can do a web search for 'MindNet Journal', which is available online through a variety of URLs. A useful newsgroup to seek out is: alt.mindcontrol. Likewise, a good place to start is the 'Mindcontrol-L' email discussion list. To join it, you send an email to majordomo@sonic.net with the following text: "subscribe MINDCONTROL-L".

BOB'S OUR UNCLE

WAS THE END OF THE WORLD REALLY NIGH? JOE MCNALLY SEEKS SALVATION IN THE ANARCHICAL CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS™

The world was scheduled to end this July. At 9.00 am on 5 July[1], when malævolent aliens were to descend to Earth and create a living hell for non-believers. The faithful, meanwhile, would be made masters of a remade solar system, ruling over the damned for eternity. This is neither the raving of yet another UFO cult – although we can probably rest assured that at least one major newspaper will have treated it, straightfaced, as such – nor the ranting of a crazed fundamentalist; it is something altogether stranger, something which may prove to be uncomfortably close to the truth. It is the doctrine of the cryptic Church of the SubGenius™.

> **THE FAITHFUL WOULD BE MADE ETERNAL MASTERS OF A REMADE SOLAR SYSTEM**

The Church™ has been enriching the lives of thousands of believers world-wide since the late 1970s. Growing out of the Dallas punk scene – Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh was an early adherent – it has grown from a private joke at the expense of the city's myriad insipid televangelists, promising *guaranteed salvation* for JUST ONE DOLLAR, into a world-spanning pseudo-cult. Along the way, it has proved to be one of the most wide-reaching exercises in guerrilla ontology since Wilson and Shea's mighty *Illuminatus!* series – and provided many laughs courtesy of those who just don't get the joke[2].

Inevitably, the SubGenius™ cosmology is both confused and confusing. We are expected to put our faith (however briefly) in J.R. "Bob" Dobbs, the greatest salesman ever to walk the Earth, who traditionally manifests in the form of the familiar smiling pipe-smoker we all know and love. On 5 July – known in the SubGenius™ calendar as X-Day – the aliens, known as the X-ists, will arrive on Earth to wreak havoc. "Bob", as the Ultimate Salesman, will sell them the souls of non-SubGenii – "pinks" in Church™ jargon – in return for which, those who have accepted "Bob" as their Short Duration Personal Saviour (or ShorDurPerServ – the Church™ is very fond of brain-crunching abbreviations) will be taken aboard the X-ists' saucers to live like gods for all eternity.

Of course, things are much, much more complex than that. Over the years, bits and pieces of doctrine have accumulated around the core of Church™ thinking, introducing such important concepts as the Launching of the Sacred Bleeding Head of Arnold Palmer, the yeti ancestry of all true SubGenii, Dobb's wife "Connie", and a whole pantheon of allies and adversaries for "Bob" himself – ranging from the Fightin' Jesus (pro-"Bob") to the mad robot deity JHVH-1 (anti-"Bob"). Lovecraftian aspects creep in with the deity Nghnghngh, while the whole freaky cosmology has more than a whiff of Scientology's little-discussed teachings about Xenu the Galactic Warlord. The whole shebang is simply too frighteningly complex even to try and summarise here; check out the books instead[3].

Obviously, their japery is not without precedent. There is a lot in the Church™ which reminds one of the the antics of the Situationists, not least in the near-sacramental reverence with which they turn innocuous clip-art and comics to their own subversive ends. The terminology of the Church™ consciously echoes that of many other religious movements. For obvious reasons, much of it is based on evangelical Christianity: SubGenii host regular "devivals", while the rolling apocalypse they so eagerly await is known as "the Rupture". Their comics owe a substantial debt to Jack T. Chick's notorious evangelical tracts, and the general tone of their own tracts is recognisably that of a holy roller or televangelist.

The Church™, however, has one thing which distinguishes it from the ranks of other cults: they actually have a sense of humour, something the Church™ possesses in abundance – and which masks some genuinely worthwhile ideas, as in among the gibberish and the ravings about yetis and sex asteroids lie nuggets of something approaching spiritual truth…

You see, what the Church™ really teaches can be boiled down to one simple phrase: think for yourself. Everything in its scriptures can be seen as a useful lesson in the value of never trusting an expert – and this extends to the Church™ itself, too. Dobbs is, after all, the ultimate salesman, and the Church™ his ultimate shill. What could be more perfectly fortean? Moreover, ideas like the ShorDurPerServ (one can adopt "Bob" as ShorDurPerServ until such time as one no longer has need of him) have more than a little in common with certain of the 'magickal' exercises practised by Crowley, as does the emphasis the Church™ puts on sex-as-sacrament. Their apparent obsession with money suggests that you don't get salvation without working for it (while also providing the founders with a certain amount of 'frop[4] money).

Of course, the scheduled end of the world – indeed, the universe – as we know it might present some problems for the continuation of the Church's™ fine works; but given the resilience, inventiveness and sheer spite of their adherents, I suspect that we'll be hearing from them for many years after X-Day is just a distant and ill-recalled memory. Chen Hon-Ming seems to have managed to continue after the non-arrival of the saucers; so will the Church of the SubGenius™.

FOOTNOTES

[1] No matter *where* you are, destruction will come to you at precisely 9.00am, beginning at the International Date Line, and sweeping slowly westward as the day progresses.

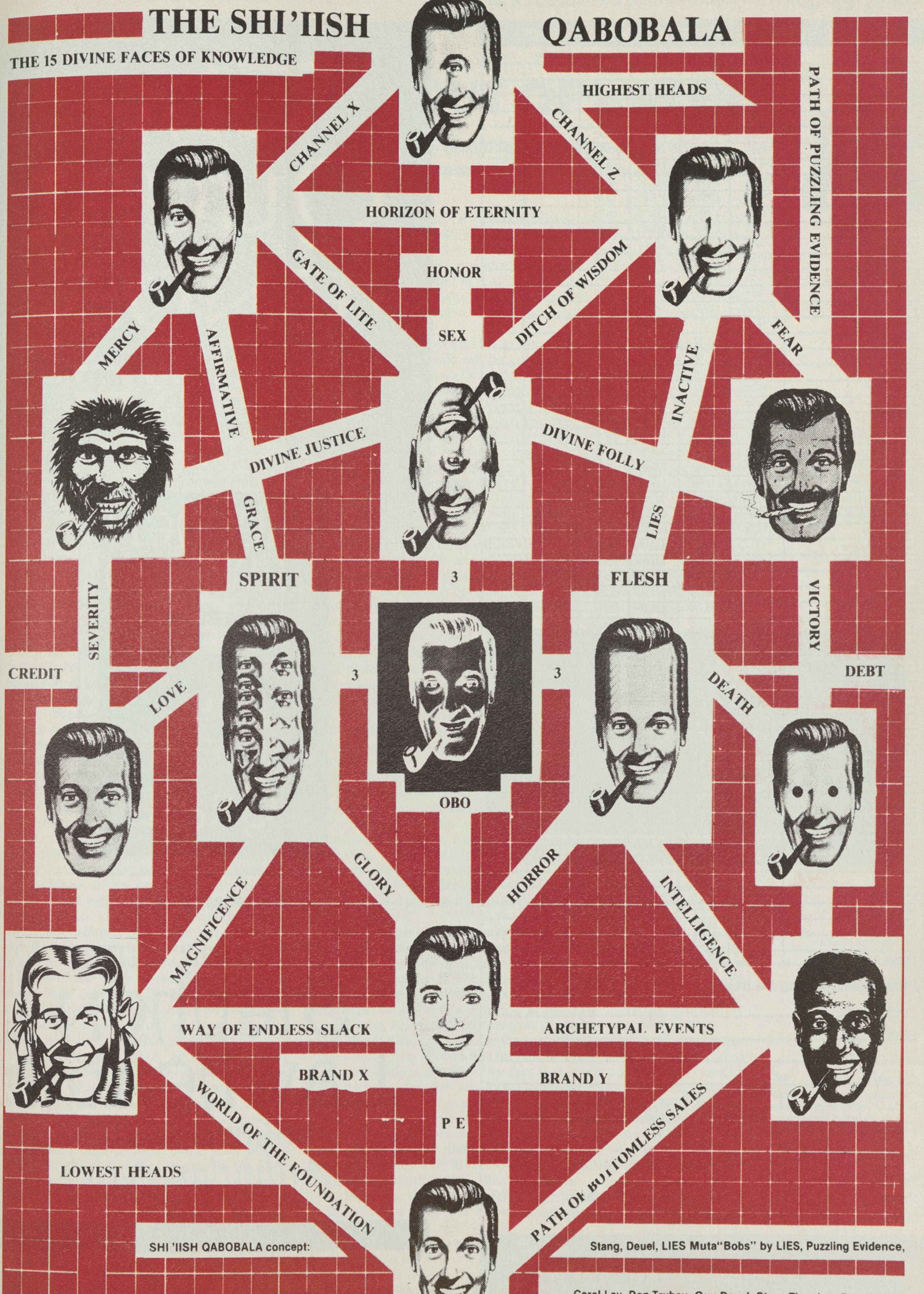
[2] Of whom there are all too many. Issue 3 of John Quel's *Hoax* magazine features lengthy extracts from a local paper's reports on Church™ activities in East Anglia, clearly orchestrated from beginning to end by local SubGenii, and concluding that the "Bob" graffiti which had been appearing around the town were satanic symbols.

A rival paranormal magazine, meanwhile, ran an entirely straightfaced warnings about the Church's™ activities in their final issue.

[3] *The Book of the SubGenius* and *Revelation X: The "Bob" Apocryphon*, published by Fireside Books (Division of Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY10020, USA).

The more adventurous may wish to peruse *Three-Fisted Tales of "Bob"*, also published by Fireside Books, which features fictional tales of "Bob" and his comic chums.

[4] It is often asked: what does "Bob" smoke in his pipe? The answer is 'frop, a frighteningly potent psychedelic herb, much too powerful for mortal bodies. Not grass. Oh no.



SHI 'IISH QABOBALA concept: Stang, Deuel, LIES Muta"Bobs" by LIES, Puzzling Evidence, Carol Lay, Don Trubey, Guy Deuel, Steve Thrasher, Dave Martin

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UFO 1947 – 1997	FT89A	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
Book of Life's Losers	FT72A	£4.99	$11.00	£5.50		
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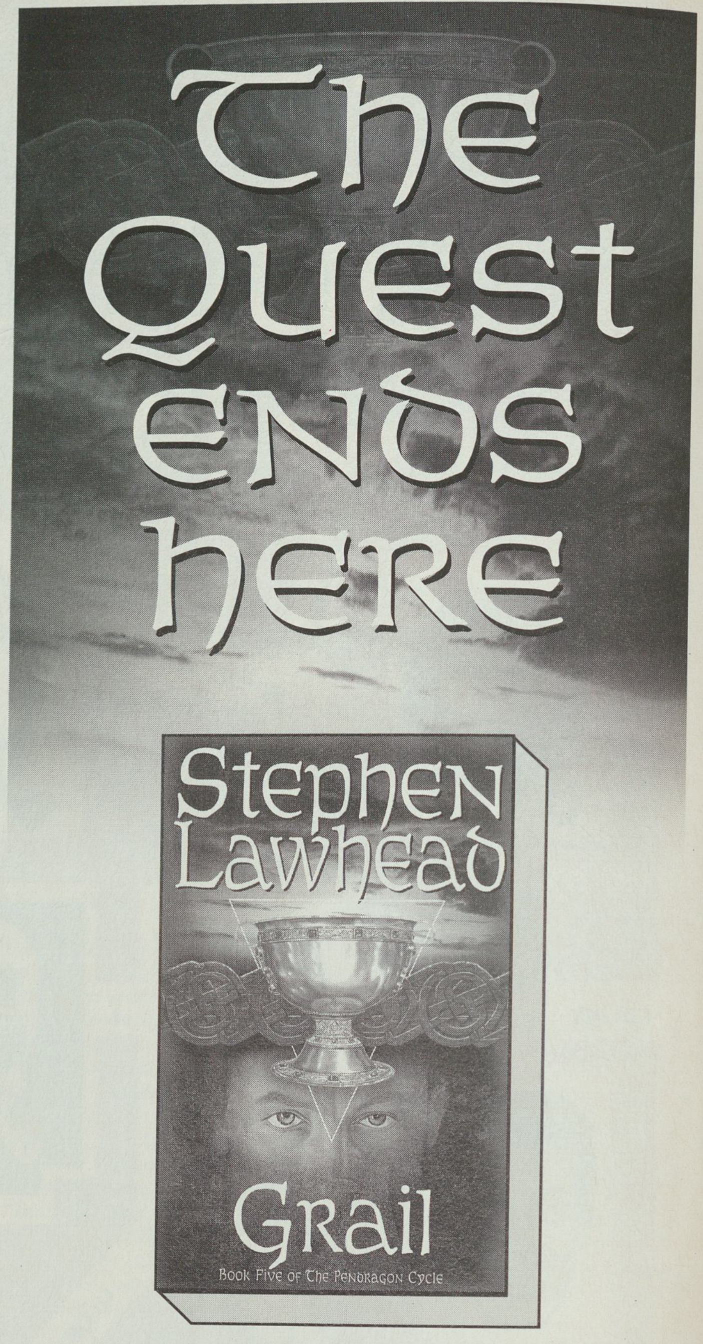

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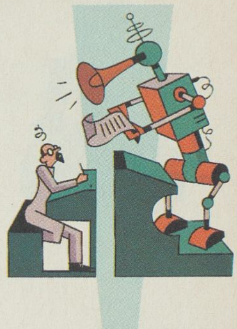


THE LOST ARK

NOT SUCH A FISH OUT OF WATER

Are long-necked water monsters really contemporary basilosaurs or plesiosaurs? Here KARL SHUKER demonstrates how the cœlacanth's discovery has furthered the debate.

Palæontology waits for no man – nor for mystery animals. In recent times, various long-treasured tenets of cryptozoology have been seriously challenged by new palæontological discoveries and interpretations, including some with relevance to aquatic cryptids.

Traditionally, palæontologists assumed that those exceedingly lengthy archæocete whales known as basilosaurids – currently believed from fossil evidence to have died out at least 36.5 million years ago – moved through the water via vertical undulations of their elongate bodies. Accordingly, generations of cryptozoologists have cited a surviving species of basilosaurid as a much-favoured identity for serpentiform lake monsters and sea serpents – famed for their ability to flex their bodies into vertical hoops when swimming.

But wait… Recent palæontological reconstructions of basilosaurids offer a very different image – postulating that the basilosaurid backbone was notably inflexible dorsoventrally, and hence would be incapable of executing the marked vertical undulations characterising the locomotion of serpentiform water monsters.

Quelle horreur! Does this mean the end of basilosaurid-based cryptofauna as we know it? Panic not. Bearing in mind that these latest basilosaurid reconstructions are drawn from fossil evidence that is at least 36.5 million years old, if a living basilosaurid exists today it will be the product of 36.5 million or more years of further evolution – ie evolution that has occurred since those most recent basilosaurid fossils were formed.

During such a considerable span of time, evolution can engender all manner of morphological and physiological modifications. Consequently, the possible existence, for instance, of an evolved contemporary basilosaurid with a more flexible vertebral column than any of its currently-known fossil antecedents cannot be entirely ruled out. Equally, it is not impossible that an analogous form could have evolved among one or more of the modern cetacean taxa whose backbones are already flexible. In short, serpentiform water monsters and vertically-undulating undiscovered cetaceans are not irrevocably incompatible after all.

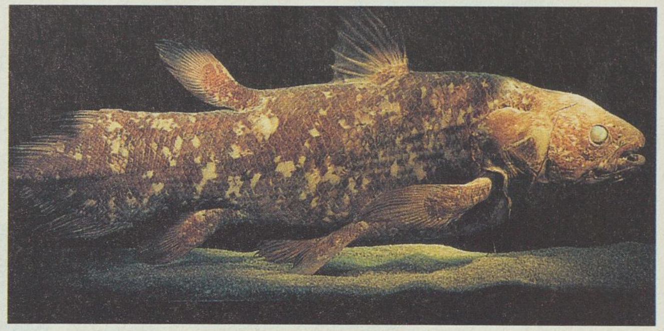
This issue is also relevant to the plesiosaur identity for long-necked water monsters. Critics of this identity enjoy attempting to expose morphological, behavioural and physiological discrepancies between these water monsters and plesiosaurs. And indeed, some such differences do exist – but that is exactly what we should expect. The only plesiosaur material currently available for science to examine is fossilised material, which is at least 65 million years old. Add to that a full 65 million years of continuing evolution, and who can possibly predict accurately how the end-product will look, behave, or function?

Dare we state with imperious authority, for example, that no modern-day plesiosaur would have dorsal air-sacs, hair-like respiratory outgrowths, or be gigantothermic when we only have 65-million-year-plus fossils for guidance? Similarly, could anyone correctly envisage the vast and precise diversity of mammalian forms alive today if presented only with the shrew-like fossils of mammals that existed 65 million years ago? And can anyone hope to prophesy unerringly what our descendants will look like in 65 million years time, always assuming that our lineage (and planet) survives that long?

Indeed, if long-necked water monsters really are contemporary plesiosaurs, we should not be surprised by the existence of differences between them and their fossil antecedents, but rather be incited to discover why plesiosaur evolution has been so very conservative during the past 65 million years!

Incidentally, I prefer not to say that plesiosaurs became extinct (or went extinct – grammatically excruciating!) 65 million years ago, simply because we cannot be absolutely, categorically certain that they did. (After all, at least as far as I am aware, no-one has checked every single cubic centimetre of sea and freshwater to confirm that there is not even one plesiosaur lurking reticently anywhere.) Instead, all that we can say with certainty – at present – is that the known fossil record does not contain any plesiosaur remains formally verified to be less than 65 million years old. And this is not the same thing at all – as exemplified by the cœlacanth.

It was back in December 1938 when the scientifically unexpected discovery of a living species, *Latimeria chalumnœ*, sensationally resurrected the hitherto 'extinct' cœlacanth lineage from post-Mesozoic obscurity. Ever since then, this lobe-finned megastar has been hailed as a classic example of how a supposedly exclusively prehistoric taxon can have a modern-day representative existing undetected by science until relatively modern times, despite possessing no post-Mesozoic fossil record. This in turn has often been cited as a significant precedent for believing that other major prehistoric animal taxa with no post-Mesozoic fossil record, such as plesiosaurs, dinosaurs, and pterosaurs, could also have undiscovered modern-day representatives.


NHPA

FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND: Could other prehistoric creatures have unknown descendents?

Recently, however, this cryptozoological crutch seemed to have been kicked away when palæontologist Darren Naish revealed to me that some post-Mesozoic cœlacanth fossils had lately been unearthed. Suddenly, portions of *Latimeria*'s long-lost Cenozoic fossil record were lost no longer. Does that mean, therefore, that the existence of *Latimeria* cannot argue any more in support of modern-day survival of plesiosaurs, dinosaurs, and suchlike?

On the contrary: I consider that this highly significant palæontological discovery should not be cursed but praised by cryptozoologists everywhere. For the very fact that it has taken science such a long time to discover any post-Mesozoic cœlacanth fossils (even though we have known definitely since December 1938 that in theory there ought to be at least a few preserved somewhere) should incite hope that there are post-Mesozoic plesiosaur, dinosaur, etc, fossils still awaiting discovery too (especially as these have never been specifically looked for) – and, in turn, that there may well be living descendants still eluding detection.

So let's hear three cheers for Old Fourlegs – long may the cœlacanth remain a symbol of cryptozoological credibility, respectability, and hope.

I wish to thank Darren Naish for kindly making available palæontological information in relation to the topics discussed here; all opinions expressed are my own.

KARL SHUKER HAS A LIFELONG INTEREST IN CRYPTOZOOLOGY. HE IS A ZOOLOGICAL CONSULTANT, LECTURER AND AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS EVOTED TO CRYPTOZOOLOGY.

MASTERS OF A DYING ART

BOB RICKARD **adds more details to the cosmic database of notable transitions.**

VINCENT H. GADDIS

One of our dwindling number of links with the time of Fort, Vincent Gaddis was a member of the original Fortean Society (FS), as was his wife, the crime novelist Margaret Paine Rea. They were introduced by author R. Dewitt Miller, another FS member, and were married on 14 July 1947. Margaret died in early 1980. Mark Chorvinsky, editor of *Strange Magazine*, who shared with Gaddis an interest in stage magic, became a close acquaintance towards the end of his life. "His lifelong research had convinced him of survival after death. Every time I talked to him, he said he could not wait to join his beloved Margaret on the other side." He died after a long fight with diabetes and polyneuritis.

STRANGE MAGAZINE

FORT'S SORT: Writer and fortean Vincent Gaddis

He learned his trade as a reporter, in the 1930s, on an Indiana newspaper and moved on to radio and magazine journalism. As one of the most influential fortean writers of his time, he bridged the worlds of serious and popular writing and described a number of now-classic fortean motifs long before they became fashionable with modern writers.

Besides countless articles on forteana for pulp magazines, such as *Argosy*, *Fate* and *Beyond Reality*, the breadth of his interests is demonstrated by his key books: *Invisible Horizons* (Chilton, Ace, 1965), *Mysterious Fires and Lights* (Dell, 1967), and *American Indian Myths and Mysteries* (1976; Borderland, 1991). With Margaret he wrote *The Strange World of Animals and Pets* (Cowles, 1970) and *The Curious World of Twins* (Hawthorn, 1972).

Invisible Horizons is notable because it introduced the notorious legends of the 'Philadelphia Experiment' and the 'Bermuda Triangle' (the latter a term he coined). He felt that Larry Kusche's famous book debunking the Triangle was a hatchet job and misrepresented his own research. *Mysterious Fires and Lights* brought the fearful subject of spontaneous human combustion into modern awareness by suggesting different theories and lines of investigation.

Curiously, Gordon Stein's *Encyclopedia of Hoaxes*, dated 1993, refers to "the late Vincent Gaddis", four years before his actual death. He was probably amused. A fuller appreciation by Mark Chorvinsky will appear in *Strange* no.19.

BORN IN MIAMIVILLE, OHIO, 28 DECEMBER 1913 – DIED IN GARBERVILLE, CALIFORNIA, JULY 1997, AGED 83.

ANTON LAVEY

According to legend, it was on Walpurgis Night, April 1966, that LaVey shaved his head and declared himself a priest of Satan, setting up his Church of Satan in a disused brothel on California Street in San Francisco. He had the 13-room Victorian mansion painted black and in it he held 'satanic' rites of his own invention – baptisms (including his daughters') and marriages, seances, cursings and a Wednesday night charm school for witches (aphrodisiacs included) – noted for their requirement for buxom and naked priestesses.

For the gossip media this self-proclaimed sorcerer was a godsend and the three-year ride of public interest brought LaVey fame and notoriety. His *Satanic Bible* sold close to a million copies worldwide and he got to play his master in Polanski's film *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). He claimed the film did for Satanism "what *Birth of a Nation* did for the Ku Klux Klan."

LaVey, ever a showman, liked to shock in this way and often annexed any convenient tragedy to enhance his 'evil' reputation; eg, in 1967 he told a reporter he placed a small curse on the Sutro Baths "and 36 hours later it burned down." Similarly, he claimed to have put a curse on Hollywood lawyer Sam Brody, which led to the car crash in which Brody died and his lover Jayne Mansfield was beheaded.

Jayne Mansfield was one of a number of Hollywood names who dallied with the Church of Satan; but while the others moved on, Mansfield's infatuation with LaVey, whom she called the 'Black Pope', became a public scandal. She had even been seen, several times, naked at his house and in some ritual or other. LaVey once said of her: "She liked to be humiliated. She longed for a stern master." Brody reacted jealously; he demanded she stop visiting LaVey and even insulted him. Naturally LaVey claimed he had defended himself with his magic powers.

This kind of boasting backfired with the murder of Sharon Tate in August 1969. LaVey is said to have conducted a ritual on Mount Tamalpais to hex the hippie movement he loathed and when the Manson killings happened a few months later he gleefully claimed success. To him, Charles Manson and his followers were too weak and vile to be proper Satanists. It was the media's wake-up call and suddenly Satanic groups were no longer a cool, if sick, joke, but something altogether more sinister. From this moment, the Church of Satan dwindled and largely faded from popular memory.

SATANIC VERSES: Anton LaVey, wife and skull

AP

LaVey had been a lion tamer and carnival worker, organist and police photographer. Behind the mock evil, he developed a creed that fitted the time and place perfectly. San Francisco in the mid-1960s was the epicentre of the anti-authoritarian spiritual convulsion which embraced drugs, free love, exotic religions and UFOs. LaVey believed that people had a right to enjoy themselves without guilt. Combining self-gratification with opposition to what he saw as the high-minded hypocrisy of the Christians, he created a "cult of animal man".

"Hate your enemies," LaVey's *Bible* advised, "and if someone smites you, smash him." On the other hand he declared: "We are the new conservatives." To LaVey, the Devil was a force of nature available, like any other, to be invoked and used by those who knew how. The quality of one's life and afterlife were determined "by the vitality and lust for life of the individual", he claimed. Theology was not his strong point, not that he cared; he once said of his Church, "it's a living". Indeed, it provided very well for him until the early 1990s when he was nearly bankrupted in an alimony fight with his wife (and high priestess) Diane.

Family members did not inform the press of LaVey's death (from a heart condition) for several days, saying they gave him a Satanic funeral in Colma where he was cremated. By arrangement his headstone epitaph reads: "I only regret the times I was too nice."

BORN IN CHICAGO, APRIL 1930 – DIED IN SAN FRANCISCO, 29 OCTOBER 1997, AGED 67.

STEVEN SCHIFF

A Republican member of the US House of Representatives, Schiff was widely regarded as a model congressman: honest, intelligent, unpretentious, and a true public servant. He was first elected to Congress in November 1988 and represented the First Congressional District of New Mexico until his death, including serving on the House Ethics Committee.

NO COVER-UP: Congressman Schiff

In 1993, Schiff acted upon the mounting requests from constituents to investigate allegations of a cover-up in the famous Roswell incident of 1947, in which the USAF is supposed to have seized a crashed UFO and occupants. Schiff stressed that this was not about exposing the truth about UFOs but about "whether the Government is being forthright with the American people".

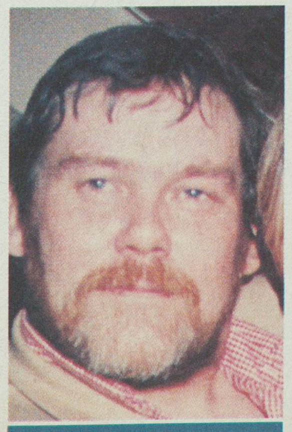
His efforts led directly to a General Accounting Office (the investigative arm of Congress) investigation of Air Force archives and two reports. One was published in July 1995 and, although highly critical of the Air Force's sloppy record keeping, revealed nothing that helped resolve the Roswell enigma. This was followed by several much-derided statements from the Air Force that firstly restated the old position – that a secret high-tech spy balloon crashed at Roswell, not an alien spacecraft – and secondly that witnesses claiming to see bodies of aliens were misinterpreting USAF high-altitude parachute tests using crash dummies.

Schiff – who had served as a district attorney, a judge advocate general in the Air Force and New Mexico Air National Guard, and a reserve colonel in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf – lost his fight with an aggressive skin cancer.

BORN 18 MARCH 1947 – DIED IN ALBUQUERQUE NEW MEXICO, 25 MARCH 1998, AGED 51.

FRANK BRENDAN SMYTH

In 1969, Smyth joined the editorial staff of *Man, Myth and Magic* – an ambitious and influential encyclopædia marketed by Purnell in 111 parts beginning in January 1970 – and continued on *Crimes and Punishments* (also for Purnell), becoming quite an authority in many aspects of many of these subjects.


WILD CHILD: Frank Smyth

DEBORAH EVANS

Smyth's interest in criminology began while he was a young reporter on a Yorkshire newspaper. He wrote *The Detective in Fact and Fiction* (1977); co-authored the (unofficially approved) account of the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper, *I'm Jack* (1979); and *Cause of Death* (Orbis, 1980) a well-received history of police forensic science. His *Modern Witchcraft* (Macdonald, 1970) — which he claimed took him just four days and which was dismissed by one reviewer as a disgrace to its publisher – had the singular distinction of being omitted from most bibliographies on the subject. He compiled the heavily illustrated *Ghosts and Poltergeists* for Aldus in 1975 and contributed articles for *The Unexplained* (1980-83), and *Unsolved* (1982-83) both successful Orbis partworks.

Smyth was just 19 when he arrived in London. He edited *Record Retailer* and then joined Pro-Ject, a PR firm that handled such groups as the Kinks, the Seekers, and the Hollies. He became a ubiquitous figure on the music scene of 'Swinging London' .

A bulky, untidy man with a huge appetite for food, drink and women, it was his gifts as a musician, mimic and raconteur that made him tolerable company. One of the last of the old breed of indigenous Soho writers, he could be found in almost any local bar, drinking with the likes of Sir John Betjemin, Ray Davies, Daniel Farson, Brian Inglis, Colin Wilson and Brian Innes (founder of Orbis). It was said that he had no aspirations to home ownership and it was only his considerable charm that persuaded his friends to forgive his more outrageous behaviour (such as overstaying his welcome by months or propositioning his hostess).

In the minds of many, he will be remembered for a hoax played upon Colin Wilson while Wilson was making *A Leap in the Dark* for BBC2, a documentary series on convincing cases of psychical phenomena. When Smyth, afterwards, revealed that he had invented the phantom vicar of Ratcliffe, Wilson was appalled. Even so, the story has appeared as fact in several books since. [*Source: D.Telegraph 9 Aug 1997.*]

BORN IN MORLEY, YORKSHIRE, 6 MAY 1940 – DIED 2 AUGUST 1997, AGED 57.

BRIEF LIVES

MINNIE

Minnie, the last surviving "astro-chimp" from the US space programme, began her career as an understudy for the more famous space-going chimpanzees of the Mercury programme, Ham and Enos. She died of old age, having never flown, and will be buried beside Ham at the Space Center.

DIED IN ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO, 14 MARCH 1998, AGED 41.

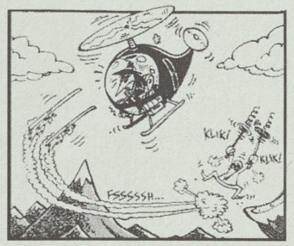
BRUCE DE PALMA

Controversial inventor and researcher into alternative energy sources and promoter of the 'N-machine' (based on a device invented by Michael Faraday) and the 'Omegatron' (a homopolar generator).

DIED IN NEW ZEALAND, 2 OCTOBER 1997.

ANTONIO PROHIAS

Cuban cartoonist Prohias is best known for his long-running surreal comic-strip 'Spy vs Spy' in *Mad* magazine. After winning the Gomez Award, considered the highest honour in Cuban cartooning, in 1946, Prohias went on to found Cuba's famous satirical magazine *Zig Zag* and was president of the Association of Cuban Cartoonists in 1959. When his caricatures of Castro were officially denounced, he fled to New York City in May 1960 where he worked on *Mad* until his retirement to Miami in 1990.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FSSSSSH...

BORN IN CIENFUEGOS, CUBA – DIED IN MIAMI, FLORIDA, 24 FEBRUARY 1998, AGED 77.

DAVID NORMAN SCHRAMM

Big Bang cosmologist, high-energy physicist and Olympic-standard Greco-Roman-style wrestler, killed when the light plane he was flying crashed near Denver, Colorado. Chairman of the department of astronomy and astrophysics at the University of Chicago.

BORN IN ST LOUIS, MO, 25 OCTOBER 1945 – DIED, 19 DECEMBER 1997, AGED 52.

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MONSTER!
COMPETITION

Godzilla, the new film from the makers of Independence Day, is currently stomping through cinemas across the country. Thanks to Columbia Tri-Star we've got a pile of limited-edition Godzilla goodies to give away to 10 Fortean Times readers, plus some exclusive prizes for one lucky winner.

Our Ten runners up will win; a Godzilla Glow in the dark Yo Yo, Godzilla Roaring Mug, Projector Lamp, and a Giant Godzilla Beach Towel.

The grand winner will collect all of the above plus:

- Godzilla Soundtrack CD
- Noisy Bank Toy
- Godzilla T Shirt
- 4 foot inflatable pencil
- Godzilla Rubber Jacket

All you have to do to enter the competition is answer the following question:

Godzilla movies originated in what country?
a) Japan b) Iceland c) Mexico

Send your answers on a postcard to: Godzilla Competition, Fortean Times, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London, W10 6SR. Competition closes 30 September 1998.

COMPETITION RULES: 1. The competition is open to all residents of the British Isles excluding employees of John Brown Publishing, Columbia Tristar Films, Epic Records, their families, agents or anyone else connected with the competition. **2.** The prizes will go to the first correct entries drawn after the closing date. **3.** The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. **4.** Details of the winners will be available on request from the offices of Bizarre Marketing, John Brown Publishing Ltd, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR. **5.** No cash alternative for the prize will be offered. The prize taken must be the same as the prize which is specified in the copy. **6.** All entries must be received on the official entry form. **7.** Closing date is 20 August 1998. Winners will be notified by 1 September 1998. **8.** Fortean Times accepts no responsibility for entries lost, damaged or delayed in the post. Entries will not be returnable. **9.** Winners must be prepared to take part in publicity before or after the prize is taken. **10.** Entrants are deemed to have accepted the rules and agreed to be bound by them.

THE GREAT OLD ONES

TITANS BELOW!

So you think dead Cthulhu lies dreaming somewhere below the Pacific Ocean? JOHN VINCENT SANDERS says recent discoveries suggest he is snoring in his sleep.

Fans of fiction writer H P Lovecraft, (1890-1937), are familiar with his 1926 story *The Call of Cthulhu*. This frightening tale revolves around a gigantic, malevolent extraterrestrial – called Cthulhu – and his minions who migrated to Earth millions of years ago and built R'lyeh, a megalithic metropolis on an island in the Pacific Ocean. These titanic beings, half-dragon and half-octopoid, engaged in endless conflict with other alien races inhabiting this planet during the age of the dinosaurs. Some unknown cosmological calamity drove Cthulhu and his brood into their immense stone citadels, and according to the story, their island/fortress eventually sank beneath the waves; trapping them in a semi-dormant state for æons.

The climax of this tale sees the dreaded island thrust back to the surface by a massive earthquake; and a chance discovery by a small merchant ship frees mighty Cthulhu to begin a reign of slaughter and destruction upon all life on Earth. Fortunately, Cthulhu is trapped again within his sepulchre when the island once more sinks beneath the waves.

Although highly entertaining for readers of gothic fiction, *The Call of Cthulhu* could easily be dismissed as nothing more than a product of Lovecraft's prodigious talent: that is, unless the results of certain recent scientific research had not been made public.

In July of 1997 – and again in January of 1998 – the Discovery Channel in the US broadcast a deep-sea nature documentary titled *Creatures of The Abyss*, which mentioned a "mysterious sound" – an immensely powerful acoustic emanation originating from "somewhere in the South Pacific, about halfway between New Zealand and Chile." Detected by the US Navy's SOSUS system – a network of undersea listening devices – the sound appears to vary in amplitude and modulation and possesses a resonant, haunting quality. The best description of it would be the breathing or repetitive vocalisations of some immense, cavern-dwelling creature.

What makes this so intriguing is the location Lovecraft gave for the "fictitious" island/city of R'lyeh: 49° 51' South, 128° 34' West. If you plot those co-ordinates on a map they indicate a position in the South Pacific – about halfway between New Zealand and Chile!

The ocean area of specific interest here is the Southeast Pacific which is, for all practical purposes, a watery Empty Quarter, devoid of archipelagos and isolated islands. In some places, the depth easily reaches 16,000ft (5,000m); the Bartholomew Deep off the Coast of Chile exceeds 26,000ft (8,000m). Oceanographers know it as the area containing the Southeast Pacific Plateau, the Pacific-Antarctic Ridge and the Pacific-Antarctic Basin.

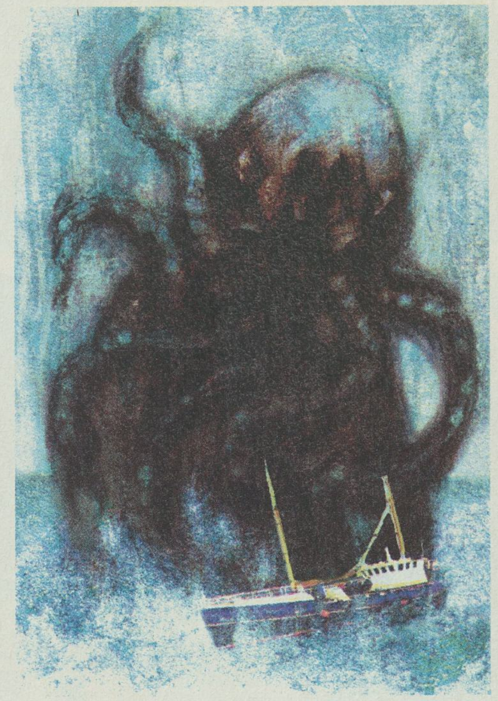
Chapter Two of Vincent Gaddis's *Invisible Horizons* is devoted to the subject of "vanishing islands." It seems a strange coincidence that many of these disappearing islands were reported from this very region of the Pacific.

Seismologists Jacques Talandier of the French Atomic Agency, Emile Okal of Northwestern University and Bernard Chouet of the US Geological survey have been investigating the origin of the mysterious sound emanating from the Southeast Pacific. Utilising data from French Polynesian seismic stations and from the aforementioned SOSUS network, they are speculating that these powerful and unique emanations are the result of "unusual conditions" in the vicinity of undersea volcanic activity. However, Bernard Chouet believes that "anything is possible" when it comes to the solution of this eerie mystery.

Initially, Talandier and Okal determined that the source of the sound was "within a poorly surveyed region of the South Pacific" – the deserted Southeast Quadrant. The existence of a recently discovered "flat-topped undersea volcano" – currently dormant, but with indications of recent activity – about 427ft (130m) below the surface, was reported as well.

Some have speculated that the stresses and pressures associated with plate tectonic activity can bend and flex the seabed in much the same way as a 'wobble-board' (a piece of thin board held by its edges that makes a sound when flexed). If this is true, then the summits of sea-mounts located near the ocean's surface might, occasionally, rise above sea level and then sink again.

Was Lovecraft simply a fiction-writer *par excellence* or, as many believe, a fortean-savant of astonishing erudition? Did his researches into the arcana of Theosophy, mythology and occult knowledge bring revelations too controversial – and too disturbing – for early 20th century society?



ROB DUNLOP

Charles Berlitz wrote about 'The Devil's Triangle' – a Bermuda Triangle-like area of the western Pacific where ships and planes have mysteriously disappeared. 'El Niño' – the weather phenomenon responsible for so much devastation and loss of life during the last 15 years – originates in the Southeasern Pacific and spreads west toward Australia. In 1969, a large-scale magnetic anomaly occurred, for some as yet unknown reason, Earth's geomagnetic field "blipped" briefly (*Science News* 10 May 1988). At the same time, a curious report surfaced of a sighting of an immense Cthulhu-like creature allegedly seen in Malaysia. According to a letter to *Pursuit* (v21, n2, p89. 1988) by Keith L. Partain, a colleague of his described seeing "an enormous seeing octopoid, possibly of ET origin." [I am still trying to locate the letter in SITU files.]

In *Chariots of the Gods*, Erich von Däniken argued that humanoid aliens visited Earth between 10,000 and 30,000 years ago. Lovecraft and others have speculated that colossal, non-humanoid extraterrestrials migrated to this planet millions of years before the dawn of humanity.

Could von Däniken's beings (if they existed at all) have left artifacts behind – perhaps drowned in the depths of the Pacific Ocean, or buried beneath the glacial Antarctic ice? Are there really Titans existing today beneath the sea? Could some awesome form of extraterrestrial life survive the ages in hibernation, somewhere in the haunted Southeast Pacific?

JOHN VINCENT SANDERS HAS BEEN INTRIGUED BY UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA FOR OVER 20 YEARS. YOU CAN REACH HIM AT: jvsanders@hotmail.com.

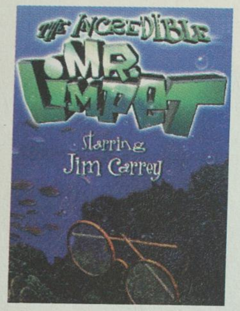
ANIMAL MAGIC

From Flipper and Lassie to Babe, Hollywood has long been fascinated with creatures that speak and behave as humans. STEVE HOLLAND learns how to talk to the animals.

Whether you view it as an allegory of socialistic ideals corrupted by the emergence of individual greed or a fairy story about a yard full of yakking farmstock, *Animal Farm* is a classic of what the intellectual fantasy fan nowadays calls 'beast-fables,' or what you, me and Rolf Harris would call 'talking animal stories'.

Chatty critters have been a rich vein mined by fantabulists as far back as Greek legend, and can be divided into roughly two groups: those that interact with man, as in Kipling's *Jungle Tales* and Hugh Lofting's *Dr Dolittle* books, or those that talk amongst themselves, as in *Watership Down*.

In real life, mankind seems to have two agendas for those with whom we share the planet: domesticate or eat. Apart from training parrots to mimic words (which they learn 'parrot' fashion, allegedly without understanding), we've only just started dialogue coaching our furry friends; recently we had a 27-year-old western lowland gorilla called Koko appearing on the internet, and there were problems. 8,000 people logged on, asked 13,000 questions, and Koko rightly ignored most of them, including the marriage proposal. When asked what she wanted for her birthday, she said "food and smokes", although her trainer, (spin) Dr Francine Patterson, insisted that she was a non-smoker and was thinking of her former pet kitten Smokey but you've got to wonder whether that really was mist those gorillas were in…



RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

ANIMAL ANTICS: The teaser poster for The forthcoming remake of *The Incedible Mr Limpet* and Rex Harrison gives an equine grammar lesson as Dr Doolittle.

It's hardly a breakthrough to know that female elephants can summon mates with a sound that resembles a rumbling stomach. We need what they have in reel life: a key to the Universal Language that all animals speak. When was the last time you heard a cat in a film asking "What did that dog say?" They may have secret codes ("Baa-ram-ewe") but "woof", "meow" and "tweet" all seem to be species accents of some Esperanto for Animals which we've only discovered in movies. It's about to appear yet again when Dr Dolittle comes to the silver screen on 31 July. Filmmakers Fox are hoping it's a bigger draw than the 1967 musical flop, and have hedged their bets by ignoring the novels entirely, ramping up the comedy element and starring trump card Eddie Murphy.

Where animals used to be heroic – Lassie, Flipper, *The Incredible Journey* – now they're cutely funny: Meerkats with bad breath, 99 out of 101 Dalmatians, Babe the sheep-pig, etc. Ah, but not for long: the success of Babe and the near perfection of the effects required to make an animal talk, there has been a rush to exploit the technology.

Hallmark recently picked up the rights to turn Orwell's *Animal Farm* into a TV movie with a budget of $25 million, which will make it the most expensive two-hour telemovie ever, but still cheap in theatrical terms.

But beware, acting with animals is not easy, as George Miller found when shooting *Babe 2: Pig in the City* in his native Australia. The storyline picks up soon after the National Sheep-Dog Trials of the original, with Babe accidentally landing Farmer Hoggett (James Cromwell) in hospital; with the bank on the verge of foreclosing on the farm, Mrs Hoggett (Magda Szubanski) takes Babe overseas to make an appearance at a State Fair. Although due for a summer release, the film allegedly overshot its wrap date by two months and has been shepherded back to November.

Cute as *Babe* was, and scary as *Animal Farm* could be, no animal movie can match fish when it comes to bizarre Hollywood notions. *The Incredible Mr Limpet* is a remake of a 1964 Don Knotts comedy in which he played the meek, weedy but patriotic Larry Limpet, an amateur ichthyologist who is turned down by the Navy but is turned into a fish and becomes the Navy's secret weapon. For the remake, Jim Carrey is to be fishified by a *Nutty Professor*-style potion. Written and directed by Steve Oedekerk (ex-*Ace Ventura*, so he's no stranger to animals or Carrey), the film goes before the cameras in October, and will make full use of Carrey's facial contortions as his full body language is going to be scaled down somewhat.

But my favourite movie idea has to be *Bad Trout*. Imagine that trout have been in charge of mankind since the beginning; now imagine that one man discovers the vast information network that fish control and use to manipulate man. Now imagine producer Steven Spielberg and Robert Zemeckis, the director of *Contact*, teaming up with Rick Carter, the production designer for the *Back to the Future* films, the *Jurassic Park* films and others to bring these bizarre, latin-spouting fish to life so they can kidnap the President. This is the sort of insane live cartoon that only turns up once in a blue moon and, personally, I've already booked my popcorn.

On a little more serious note, Hollywood effects men have recently been taking the plaudits for creating the Bigfoot footage shot back in October 1967 by Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin – the wagging finger aimed at John Chambers, who also designed the costumes for the *Planet of the Apes* series. Although Chambers will neither confirm nor deny, his work was a masterpiece for the time… and it's about to be updated with no less a person than Jim "King of the World" Cameron writing and producing, so we can expect to see ultra-realistic sfx.

And we can only hope that similar care is taken in bringing another *Fortean Times* favourite to the screen: El Chupacabra, who is to star in *Creature*, in which a student travels to Mexico to disprove the goatsucker's existence. It doesn't take too much imagination to figure out that he's likely to become its next victim, and thankfully mankind is blessed with imagination to burn. After all, how else would you explain why Johnnie Morris was such a star to so many kids and why we really believed those animals were getting into heavy conversations while they were chewing the cud. The only thing I ever questioned was that if vegetarians eat vegetables, are humanitarians cannibals?

STEVE HOLLAND IS A FREELANCE WRITER, EDITOR AND MOVIE-MEDIA NEWSHOUND.

"I got 95% in a University essay – thanks to PhotoReading!"

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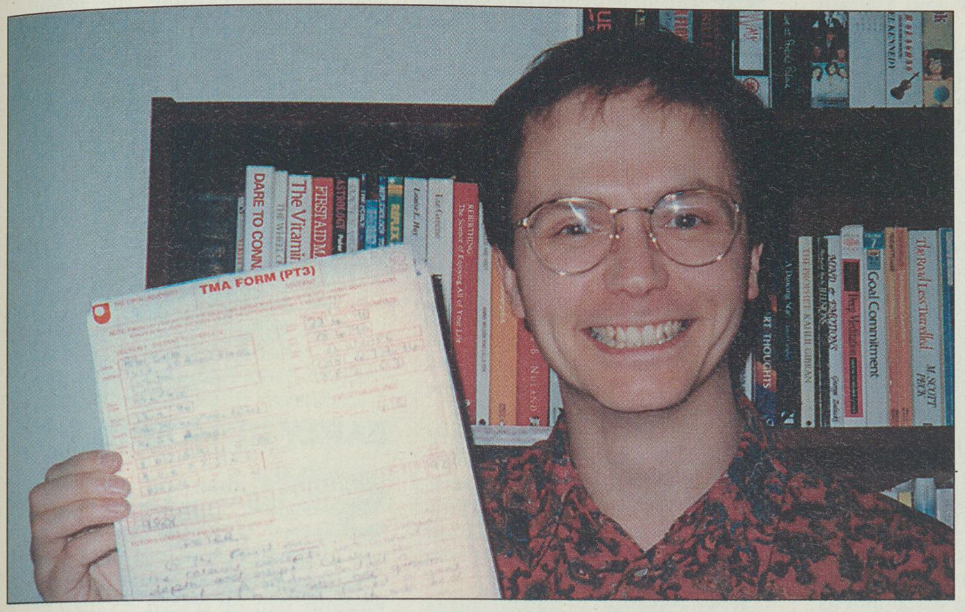

Says Peter Barka: "I got 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course. All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute."

"I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT," said Peter Barka, who lives in Surbiton. "I opened up the envelope containing my marks for two Open University essays I wrote, and got a real shock. My tutor had awarded me 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course.

"What amazed me was that I was only expecting 65-70%, which I usually get for my essays. I hadn't done any background reading – I didn't get round to it in time – or the expected 15 hours a week study time!

"Yet my tutor wrote in his report: 'In the Freud essay you analysed the relevant concepts with unusual depth and insight. Clearly a pass 1 (95%). A similar standard is maintained in the short notes questions. You have evidently gained a great deal of knowledge which will be of use throughout the course.'

"I was shocked at the result"

"All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters on Freud and Piaget at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute. Then, when I Rapid Read the chapters, I noticed that the text seemed to have a tinge of familiarity to it. I also PhotoRead some essay/thesis-writing guides.

"When I sat down and wrote the essay I felt I knew something about the subject. But after I wrote the essay I thought 'Oh my god, I'll probably do worse than last time when I got 73%', especially as I'm very left brain, and the subject matter was more right brained. How wrong I was!"

Peter was overjoyed on the day he got, for him, the unusually high marks: "I felt delirious, and I danced around like an idiot. I was just shocked at the result. I still feel quite shaky when I talk to my friends about the possibilities of PhotoReading."

"I'm absolutely bowled over!"

Hilke Legenhausen, 27, and based in East Grinstead, earns her living as a translator. She spent a couple of weeks learning to PhotoRead, and then PhotoRead her German-English dictionary twice.

"The dictionary has 1,600 pages, so I Photo-Read the whole of it in about half an hour. I got my personal proof that the system works when I translated a German magazine into English: I only had to look up four expressions when 40 or 50 would be normal for me. I'm absolutely bowled over!

"I'm about to start PhotoReading all my textbooks for the next year, and guess what: anatomy and physiology don't scare me anymore!"

Ms Hilke Legenhausen: PhotoRead a German-English dictionary and "got personal proof that the system works"

"I almost felt a cheat"

Vee Freir, who lives in the Highlands of Scotland, recently completed an Open University BSc Honours degree.

In the last OU year she had to read 22 course units, plus set books and other reference material, and submit seven written assessments (TMAs) which included project work.

She enthuses: "As a result of using the PhotoReading techniques I got so far ahead that I completed the reading and the written assessments a couple of months early. The tutor was a bit taken aback as he'd never experienced this before and, what's more, my assessments averaged 87%.

"For one essay I went in the library and PhotoRead 16 books with the purpose of getting one relevant quote from each. Within half an hour of PhotoReading I had done just that, and I was amazed how quickly it happened.

"I almost felt a cheat, yet I went through every page of each book, and must have subconsciously absorbed the relevant parts to have accessed the information that quickly."

"A strange experience" says McKenna

TV hypnotist Paul McKenna learned to PhotoRead for a Channel 4 documentary. He commented: "When PhotoReading does work it's a strange experience. I ended up feeling a bit light-headed. I couldn't actually remember anything about the book – until the questions started. I just seemed to know some of the answers. I scored 73% which was statistically well in excess of anything I could have got just by guessing."

"PhotoReading is literally eye-opening"

Sheila Ostrander, co-author of the best-selling book SuperLearning 2000, is very enthusiastic about PhotoReading: "It's literally eye-opening. In a sense PhotoReading is a specialised case of SuperLearning. The same core techniques are evoked – being in the right state of body and mind, feeding data to and accessing it from the unconscious, dissolving learning blocks – but applied to reading instead of, say, language learning.

"PhotoRead 100s of pages in minutes"

"Once you're connected to your brilliant second self, your unconscious, you can PhotoRead hundreds of pages in a very short time – just a few minutes – then be able to zero in on the key nuggets. This belief echoes the time-expansion work of Erikson, Rakov, and Houston and Masters, where people are prompted to get out of their own way and let their unconscious do the work in a fraction of the usual time."

Ostrander carries on: "Speed reading has been around and working for over half a century, yet it's still rarely used in business or education. PhotoReading is a much more organic system, which flows with the nature of our expanding view of ourselves. It may well be standard equipment for 21st century Superlearners."

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LETTERS

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OR E-MAIL TO sieveking@forteantimes.com

IT'S SHRIMPS!

Re John Hall's letter [*FT105:52*]: as an (English) English-dialectologist, I can confirm that the plural of 'shrimp' is indeed 'shrimp' in the USA, but is normally 'shrimps' elsewhere (though younger Aussies are now saying 'shrimp'). I don't wish to sound petty, but this is typical of American readers of international magazines. Apparently *Nexus* (I read it even though I don't take its contents very seriously!) gets many such letters complaining about "spelling mistakes"!

MARK NEWBROOK
Linguistics Department, Monash University

HILL VIEWS

Betty Hill's down-to-earth views with regards to her 'alien abduction' [***FT110:28***] demonstrate some errors common to other 'abductees' and therapy junkie 'survivors'.

She indirectly demonstrates the "my experience was more real than yours" mentality common to many survivor/victim movements. She dismisses other abductees' experiences on the basis of hypnotic procedures they underwent, whilst claiming that her own "medical" hypnosis is valid and acceptable.

She uses the nominalisation "medical" as a prefix to "hypnosis" as though this sets her apart from the rest. (Using a nominalisation as a prefix is a common phenomenon. When I was a casualty nurse, I frequently heard patients report such things as: "I think I have a suspected fracture, doctor!" As a psychotherapist, now I frequently hear patients reporting that they have "clinical depression" or "chronic/acute anxiety".)

Semantics aside, when an 'abductee' decides to see a hypnotist, the paradigm for regression is already set. A huge presupposition is already in operation acting as an "unconscious suggestion" long before hypnotist and abductee even meet.

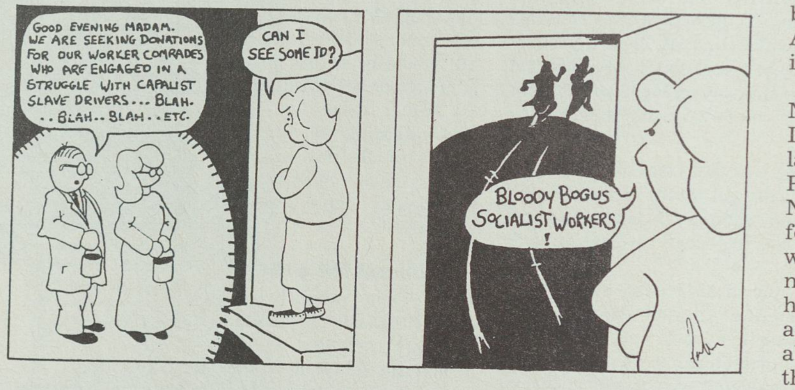
The selection of hypnotist on the grounds of reputation and the hypnotist's own beliefs in alien encounters will increase the presupposition, still further establishing the lost memory = abduction paradigm.

I am not sure what Betty Hill intends when she calls hypnosis "medical". I guess she is referring to "deep trance phenomena" and a belief that "medical hypnosis" does not lead the client in any way by using 'clean' language: a position that linguists assure me is quite impossible. A certain mindset (paradigm) exists by the very fact the client has asked, or has been asked, to be hypnotised for a specific reason in the first place.

Recovering memory of 'alien abductions' is similar to recovering non-existent memories of abuse from those clients with memory gaps who go to recovered memory 'therapists' (hypnotists by a different name) with the conscious intention (paradigm) of recovering something sinister.

Enough of this nonsense!

ANDREW T. AUSTIN
Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire


GOOD EVENING MADAM. WE ARE SEEKING DONATIONS FOR OUR WORKER COMRADES WHO ARE ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE WITH CAPALIST SLAVE DRIVERS... BLAH.. BLAH.. BLAH.. ETC.
CAN I SEE SOME ID?
BLOODY BOGUS SOCIALIST WORKERS!

JOHN TAIT

EARTH'S SECOND SUN

One surprising hypothesis not mentioned by Paul Chambers in his article on asteroid impact and the Cretaceous mass extinction [***FT 111: 34-37***] is the suggestion that we live in a binary star system. Once every 26 million years or so, the Sun's companion star swings in close enough to disturb comets in the Oort Cloud and launch a shower of them our way, neatly explaining the Cretaceous and other extinction events by multiple comet impacts spread over however many thousands of years you want. Although this answers the critics of a single impact event, it does rather depend on finding a suitable companion star for the Sun.

I missed the original publication of this hypothesis in *Nature* in 1984 (as apparently did *FT*), but came across it later in an essay by the estimable Stephen Jay Gould (republished in *Bully For Brontosaurus*, Penguin 1992).

More recently I picked up a detailed popular account of the hypothesis by its proponent, Dr Richard Muller, with an introduction by Prof. Luis Alvarez. Unwisely titled *Nemesis, The Death Star* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), this is well worth reading, not only for details of the theory itself, but for Richard Muller's battles to shift established scientific paradigms and prevent his data being arbitrarily dismissed. Our man Charles would have sympathized.

I presume Dr Muller never found his Nemesis... or should we still be watching the skies?

DR PETER ROBERTS
P.Roberts@lion.rbgkew.org.uk

ANCIENT FROG FALL

We came across this little piece of early forteana in Aelian's *De natura animalium*, a Greek work of about 200AD.

"I am informed that when it hails in the Thebaid, mice can be seen lying upon the ground; one portion of them still mud while the other has become flesh. And I myself – travelling from Naples to Dicaearchia – encountered a shower of frogs, whose foreparts crawled upon two feet while the other trailed behind, still without animal form and appearing to consist of some moist element." [Book II. 56]

Aelian's (*not* Alien's) accounts are often absurd or naive, but this is one of the few instances when he claims to have been an eye-witness. It is the earliest frog rain account we have come across, and reveals – at the very least – that this is a long-standing obsession.

DALE HOUSTMAN AND THOMAS CLARKSON
Minneapolis, Minnesota

EARLY RUMOURS

Sceptics maintain that the so-called "Philadelphia Experiment", when the *USS Eldrich* was allegedly teleported briefly in 1943 from Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia, can be traced no further back than a letter from Carlos Allende to Dr Morris Jessup in 1956, the implication being that Allende made it all up.

I joined the Navy in 1948. In 1949 I was laid up in the Philadelphia Navy Hospital for a month with pneumonia, where I heard tales and rumours about something that happened near the end of the war, with sailors blinking on and off. That's all I heard, but I *did* hear it!

GEORGE 'YURI' MAYERCHAK
Long Prairie, Minnesota

DIAGRAM DECODED

You printed a letter of mine regarding a diagram that I discovered beneath my carpet [***FT111:50***]. Not long after I wrote to you, I found out what it means. It appears the decorating shop next door to my house used the room for storage many years ago. The codes refer to patterns of Lincrusta, the hugely expensive stucco-on-a-roll stuff, and the diagram was for placement in storage.

Dull huh? And I thought it was the Rennes-le-Château of Tameside!

CAROL MOORES
Hyde, Cheshire

BIBLICAL "BUT"

I'm not in a position to check most of the statements in Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince's articles about Leonardo da Vinci [***FT110:34*** & ***111:28***], but at least one of them strikes me as distorting the evidence by omission, to say the least. This is the claim that when Christ is quoted as describing John the Baptist as "born of women" he is actually insulting him. Anyone who has access to a Bible can check the full quotation as given in Luke 7:28: "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: *but* he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Italics mine. The version in Matthew 11:11 is essentially equivalent, but uses "notwithstanding" instead of "but".)

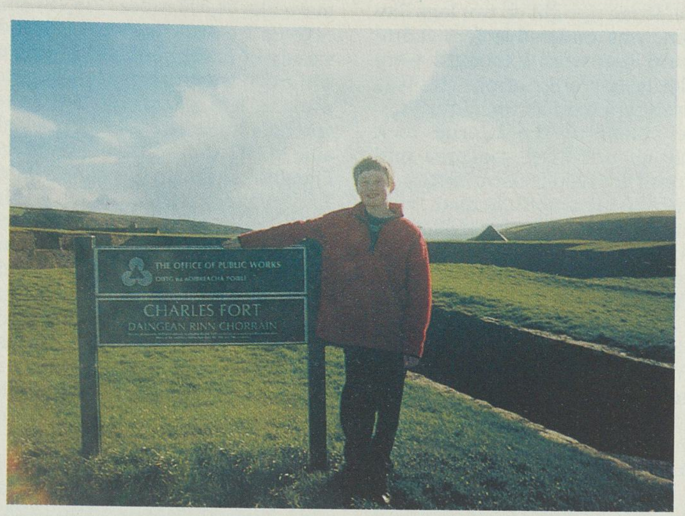
The restoration of this simple omission confutes what Picknett and Prince say; the quotation, in fact, does not make sense if you interpret it as pejorative.

J. R. ORMOND
Ludlow, Shropshire

NOT *THE* CHARLES FORT...?

Readers might care to ponder this photograph of my son, Michael Collins, taken on a recent day out near Kinsale, County Cork.

DR DICK COLLINS
Blarney, Co. Cork, Ireland



NOT PROVEN FAKES

Kevin McClure's review of my book *Alien Base* [***FT111:53***] includes some egregious misrepresentation.

Commenting on the photographic plates, for example, he states that he asked my publishers "whether these many photos had been subjected to the remarkably sophisticated techniques of photo analysis now available before he chose to publish them. It seems that he thinks they are fakes, had no such analysis conducted prior to publication, but has offered to have some of them tested now,"

In his 12 March response to McClure's initial letter, Mark Booth, my editor at Century, explained that "both the Adamski and Villa photographs have been subject to professional, independent photographic analysis by William T. Sherwood, an optical physicist and senior project development engineer at Eastman Kodak. Timothy Good says that no-one has ever shown the objects in the Adamski photographs to be mundane and readily explainable [and] the Villa photographs do not share features with faked UFO photographs..."

Granted, Sherwood's analyses were conducted over 30 years ago, and for this reason I am funding an independent, professional, up-to-date analysis of a selected number of the controversial Adamski and Villa photographs, to be conducted by Dr Roger Green, head of research at the Electronic Imaging & Media Communications Unit, Faculty of Engineering, University of Bradford, the results of which I will make public.

McClure goes on to remark that I published "three photographs of 'dead aliens'", whereas there is only one – a photo of a not necessarily alien creature allegedly killed by 'Chino' Zayas in Puerto Rico in 1979 or 1980, plus a close-up of its dented skull. McClure adds that this 14in (36cm) tall creature was reported in *Flying Saucer Review* to have had "a large penis and large testicles as big as those of an adult man", and points out correctly that "it has nothing of the sort protruding anywhere from its tiny, bony, unconvincing torso". Yet Mark Booth had explained in a letter to McClure on 17 March that the creature's sex organs "were fully developed and proportionately large, relative to the creature's height." Indeed, this is the case, as Jorge Martin explained to me in Puerto Rico.

With regard to the 1993 Polaroid photograph by Filiberto Caponi of a (live) creature in Italy, McClure comments that it "has recently been shown to be a fake". It is true that Eduardo Russo of the Italian Centre for UFO Studies pronounced last year that Caponi's photographs were "obvious hoaxes", based on investigations by his group. I am corresponding with Senor Russo to determine the facts of his investigation. Having twice travelled to Italy to interview Caponi and his family, and having visited the site of the encounters, I so far have found no evidence of hoaxing.

Finally, McClure writes that although I have "apparently" travelled to Puerto Rico on five (now six) occasions, I "do little more than report what has allegedly been told to... Jorge Martin." In many cases I have interviewed in person the witnesses at length, usually at the site of their claimed experiences, and in 90 per cent of cases I find that Martin has quoted them accurately.

TIMOTHY GOOD
London

NEW ANGLE ON SHC?

I have come up with a theory of my own about Spontaneous Human Combustion.

At school you are taught that there is a uniform temperature throughout a substance – all atoms at the same temperature. But what if this is not the case and it works more along the lines of Van der Waal's forces?

Van der Waal's are where there is constant fluctuation of the electrons around an atom causing dipoles, which in turn induce dipoles in surrounding atoms, creating an attractive bond. It is a constantly oscillating pole, yet you get an overall constant bond.

Relating that to temperature, what if there are many different temperatures of atoms in a substance ranging from absolute zero to tens of thousands of Kelvin? These are constantly heating and cooling the atoms around them, and hot and cold are equally spread throughout, giving the substance a supposedly uniform temperature.

What would happen then, if by, some strange action, all the highly heated atoms occurred in the same area at exactly the same time? Even for a micro-second? POOF! Spontaneous Combustion.

What are people's thoughts?

MARTHA PRINCE
Edgbaston, Birmingham

DEEP STONE

In July 1996, while I was visiting friends in Devon, they took me for a run on Dartmoor and the Okehampton ranges. On the way back, we stopped at a hotel/pub in South Zeal for supper. There was a standing stone in the dining room – around which the premises had been built. It stood some 8ft (2.4m) clear of the floor.

Some years ago an excavation was done to see how long it was, and after digging some 27ft (8.2m) below ground work was halted as the bottom still had not been reached!

D.G. SINCLAIR
Wallington, Surrey

PUNISHING SAINTS

Regarding the article on burying a statue of St Joseph to help sell real estate [***FT106:15***]: The practice of 'humiliating' or 'punishing' a saint until a prayer or request is granted was known as far back as Carolingian times. The statues of saints were threatened with beatings, removed from their shrines, or given a tongue-lashing.

One Middle English text tells of a woman who locked a statue of the Virgin Mary in a chest and wouldn't let it out until her prayer was granted. Conversely, donations of money, jewellery, textiles, or *ex votos* were lavished on saints that came through for their grateful 'clients', as a saint's devotees were known. Some of the instructions for the St Joseph kits specify that once your house sells, you must dig up the statue and take it with you to your new home. The modern equivalent of taking the Virgin Mary's image out of the strongbox?

CHRIS WOODYARD
Beavercreek, Ohio

INCIDENT IN GABON

I read Sian Hall's article on African manimals with interest. In 1993, while working at an isolated oil facility in Gabon, I was in my car around noon driving "home" for lunch, when a strange creature ran across the road in front of me. It ran upright on two legs like a man, was under five feet (1.5m) tall and had what I thought were particularly long arms. It was covered in a reddish fur, almost the same colour as the laterite rock which abounded in the area and was used for road construction.

The animal ran off the road, holding its arms above its head as it ran through the long grass, and disappeared into the forest. I mentioned it afterwards to one of the locals, who called it a "sipandjee" (accent on the second syllable – not to be confused with "chimpanzee" or its French equivalent) and warned me that they were aggressive.

This was my only sighting of such a creature in the five years I was in Gabon, and I have never seen a photograph of any ape that resembles it.

STEVE HOLMES
sholmes@british-borneo.com

BEASTLY CAR

Having just watched the 29 January edition of *Fortean TV* about the exorcism of the Ford Capri with the 666 numberplate [see ***FT99:16***], I was reminded of an experience I had with a 666 number plate.

Seven years ago, I purchased a VW Golf, registration number LTA 666W. The mileage was low for its age (48,000 (77,246km)) and its condition seemed good. However, the fuel gauge was faulty, causing me to run out of fuel when apparently half full.

The next week the radiator overheated, cracked and subsequently needed to be replaced. While the car was in being repaired, I was informed that it had been clocked and the true mileage was probably more like 84,000 miles (135,181km).

Over the next few weeks, a wide variety of faults surfaced. However, while driving through a village after working late, I misjudged a corner and hit a traffic island. As I was only able to afford third party insurance, I couldn't make an insurance claim. The breakdown truck that was originally called to pick up the vehicle broke down and I got home many hours later. When I went to a body repair shop, I was told that the car would cost £500-600 to repair, which I couldn't afford, and in any case that was more than it was worth. I phoned a local scrap dealer who took the vehicle away and gave me £120 for it.

Some weeks later, I saw the car in town. Obviously, a cheap repair had been affected by the scrap dealer. I noticed a sheet of paper on the windscreen: "Broken down. AA called". Two weeks later I saw the car being towed away from outside my apartment block.

MATT BROAD
bert@defcon.demon.co.uk

GAGE SKEWERED

I thought your report on survivors of horrific injuries [***FT109: 18***] was excellent, but there are a few minor inaccuracies in the section about Phineas Gage.

Rather than being a uniform 1.18in (3cm) diameter blunt cylinder, which would surely have removed most of Gage's head, the 3ft 7in (1.1m) long tamping iron tapered like a pool cue from 1.25 in (3.7cm) at one end to 0.25in (0.7cm) at the other.

It weighed a hefty 13.25lbs (6kg) and was blown through his left cheek and out the top of his head with such force that it landed 30m (as opposed to 'several' metres) behind him. Gage was knocked over, he may have momentarily lost consciousness and there may have been some convulsive leg movements. However, as stated, Gage was able to walk back to his colleagues, chat with them and even, as foreman, make an entry in his time book.

His initial lack of symptoms is even more remarkable when one reads the original clinical descriptions of the injuries by the doctors who examined and treated him. John Harlow, the second physician to arrive, describes extensive fracturing of the skull, partial protrusion of the left eye and 'serious lesion of the brain substance… disintegrating and pulpifying it, drawing out a considerable quantity of it at the opening in the top of the head…'. This opening was almost 3.5in by 2in (9cm by 5cm) and Harlow describes (remember, this is 150 years ago!) how he could touch the tips of his two index fingers together by pushing one into each wound and thereby remove large and apparently identifiable pieces of skull!

The statement that Gage 'made a full recovery within a few months', although broadly true, perhaps obscures the stormy nature of that recovery. The records, as might be expected, mention profuse bleeding, episodes of delirium and coma, brain abscess, the necessity to remove 'fungi' during change of dressings and permanent blindness in his left eye. As well as the famous change of personality as a result of the damage to the left (and possibly right) frontal lobe of the brain, Gage developed epilepsy and died of this in 1860, 11 years after the accident. Unfortunately for posterity, no post mortem examination was carried out and the debate continues to this day as to the exact extent of his brain injury.

Gage spent some time between 1850 and 1852 working for the famous Barnum's Museum (or Circus). When his case, as a medical curiosity, was presented to the Boston Society for Medical Improvement on 10 November 1849, he was sandwiched between the case of a child cured of an enlarged ankle by purgatives and the display of a 'Remarkable Stalagmite...[having] a singular resemblance to a petrified penis'.

These and other details are taken from Malcolm Macmillan's excellent chapter on Gage from *Classic Cases in Neuropsychology*, by Code *et al* (Eds), Psychology Press, 1996.

DR PETER TALBOT
Lisburn, Northern Ireland

SPACE RIGHTS

I write concerning a law passed by the UK Government known as The Outer Space Act 1986. Section 3 of the Act prohibits persons from activities as described in Section 1 without a licence from a UK Secretary of State; in particular, Section 1(c): any activity in outer space. The definition of outer space as set out in section 13(1) is: "The Moon and other celestial bodies."

Thus the British Government claims the right to forbid activities on the Moon and in outer space. Presumably if a UFO lands in the UK, the police could arrest the alien crew for not getting a government flying licence. This daft law must be corrected – lobby your MP!

DR BRETT ALLEN
St. Albans, Hertfordshire

Outer Space Act 1986

WHAT A CROC

In his letter ['What Lurks Below' ***FT108:55***], David Hambling states that a 'Nile alligator" was captured in a Paris sewer in 1984. There are no Nile alligators. Alligators are found in the southern part of the USA (*Alligator mississippiensis*) and along the Yangtze Kiang River in China (*Alligator sinensis*).

The only crocodilian living in the Nile is *Crocodlyus niloticus*; the Nile crocodile. This is the second largest living crocodile at approximately 23ft (7m) in length. The Indo-Pacific crocodile, *Crocodylus porosus*, may reach 30ft (9m)!

True crocodiles are tropical creatures, but alligators are found in more temperate climates. For example, the Chinese alligator can withstand quite harsh frosts. Hence alligators would survive better in sewers than their larger, more aggressive relatives. Indeed, there are several cases of sewer 'gators from the USA.

In February 1935, a 7ft 6ins (2.3m) alligator was captured and killed in a sewer at 123rd Street, New York. Another turned up two years later, when a 2ft (61cm) specimen was captured alive in the Brooklyn Museum subway station, also in New York. A 10in (25cm) 'gator was killed in a basement drain in Newton, Kansas in July 1970, and a drainpipe in Hampton Virginia produced a 30in (76cm) reptile in 1982.

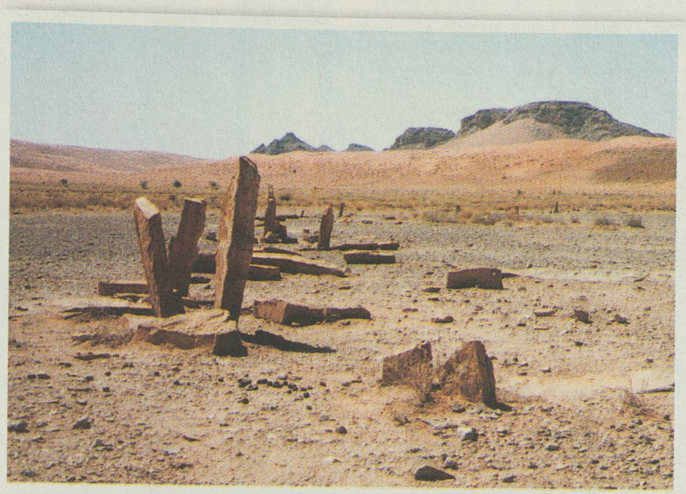
These are all a far cry from the giant man-eaters beloved of horror writers and it is unlikely that they could survive here in Britain. Perhaps we should worry more about the new 'super rats'. Here in Leeds, a woman's mastiff dog was attacked by a giant rat in Roundhay Park. Never mind *The X-Files*, this is more like the classic *Dr Who* story "Talons of Weng Chiang" Has anyone got a Chinese fowling piece?

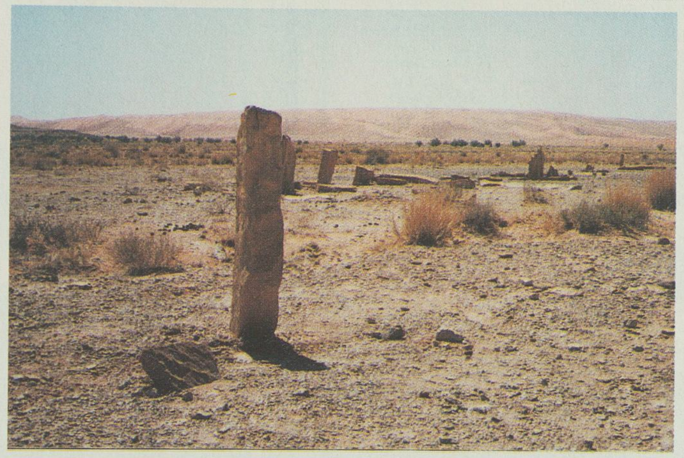
RICHARD FREEMAN
Leeds, West Yorkshire

SAUDI STONES

I have the honour to enclose photographs of a semi-circle of standing stones about 60km (37 miles) south of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Archæologists estimate it was erected in the later centuries BC or early centuries AD, but the builders and their purpose are unknown.

NOBUHIRO MATSUOKA
Embassy of Japan
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia





QUALIFIED HOT AIR

T.L. O'Callaghan asked about qualifications that are available for 'psychics' [***FT109:55***].

In fact, *Prediction* has advertisements for many such courses (usually by post) and organisations. The following is sample of what I have recently noticed: 'Diploma Course in Astrological Counselling', 'Diploma Course in Tarot Studies', 'D.F.Astrol. S.' (Diploma from the Faculty of Astrological Studies), Diploma courses from the Cheirological Society, 'D.M.S.' (the Diploma of the Mayo School of Astrology) and 'Home Study Diploma Course in New Age Knowledge' (includes astral travel, mediumship etc.).

BRIAN TOLLEY
Hazel Grove,
Stockport

DOWN TOWN

David Hambling's piece on lost underground stations and subterranean citadels which exist beneath London [***FT108:55***] reminded me of something a neighbour told me in the summer of 1996.

He was a maintenance and repair engineer for large heavy duty machinery and explained that once he had a repair job under the Palace Theatre in Manchester city centre. After finishing a job, he tended to wander around to kill time, or to duck out of other work required of him elsewhere. This time, he meandered around many corridors and down stairways and was amazed at the length of the corridors and rows of doors facing him. He was further astonished to find some open areas resembling poorly-lit streets. Although it was difficult for him to judge their actual size, he noticed there were very large and very clean corridors and types of streets going in all directions.

Feeling a little uncomfortable, he decided to head back up, but was confronted by two men who took him to a room and questioned him for over an hour. Both were dressed like military police, but somewhat dated in appearance. One of them searched his wallet for identification. Having nothing to hide, he answered all their questions, although they never seemed happy with his answers. To his relief, he was eventually guided up stairs and through doors and allowed to go on his way.

Expecting that a complaint would be made to his employer followed by a reprimand, and not having time to get to the next job, he felt rather disgruntled and went home – only to find his house had been broken into and ransacked.

He reported this to the police who found it very unusual that nothing seemed to have been stolen. He never received any complaint from work and only then did he feel that the two incidents were linked.

TONY CRANSTOUN
Brownley Green, South Manchester

SPORT OF NATURE?

That fused fœtus [***FT111:9***] looks distinctly dodgy. The skeletons are "fused" face-to-face, but the single set of facial bones are normal and symmetrical, despite being rotated 90 degrees out of alignment with the two skulls they supposedly belong to. It looks for all the world as if someone has removed the fronts of the skulls from two fœtal skeletons, and then stuck them to the sides of a third skull. In fact, there even seems to be some authentic eighteenth-century sticky tape visible along the joins.

GRANT L HUTCHISON
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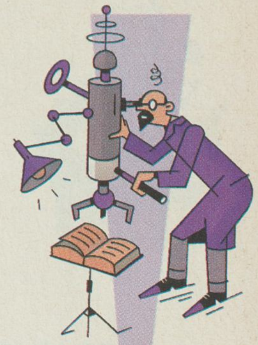
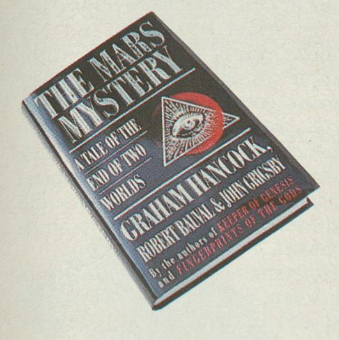
MULTIMEDIA REVIEWS PAGE 58



MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH



MARS MYSTERY
A TALE OF THE END OF TWO WORLDS

GRAHAM HANCOCK, ROBERT BAUVAL AND JOHN GRIGSBY

Michael Joseph, London, 1998, hb, £16.99, pp374, index, illus, refs. ISBN 0-7181-4314-0

●○○○○

Since *The Sign and the Seal*, Graham Hancock has had an extended love affair with the UK media, partly because he is one of their own (he wrote for the *Economist*, so he must know what he's talking about…) and partly because – in suitably Anglo-Saxon fashion – he always falls just short of total commitment to his ideas.

The two main segments of *The Mars Mystery* cover the 'artificial' structures at Cydonia (including a last-minute re-write to include the new Global Surveyor 'Face' images) and the threat to the Earth from heavenly bodies.

In addition you get much speculation on the 'line of dichotomy' and 'life' on Mars, 'sacred' geometry, a 'K/T Boundary Event' which "all scientists today accept" (questioned in ***FT111:34-37***), and a smattering of Egyptology thrown in for good measure.

Hancock's conceit of playing both ends against the middle has finally collapsed with this book. How does he think that he is going to have the asteroid threat section taken seriously (and he does seem to be on one of his crusades by this point) if it's mixed in with extraterrestrials, lazy references to Hermeticism and alchemy and – Hancock's current favourite – the Gnostic battle between good and evil?

He even asks us to imagine the responsibility of being the only "spark of consciousness… in the entire universe" – how could we be so complacent about our imminent destruction? The gross assumptions inherent to this line of reasoning are too numerous to catalogue.

But that's not all. There's still space for a functioning but now covert Mars Observer, the geometric properties of Pathfinder as "message received" to an unspecified Martian intelligence (as per Hoagland), and a US government/NASA conspiracy of such unified coherence that it makes parts of *The Mars Mystery* read like a renegade *Dark Skies* episode.

Oh, and did you know that Armstrong's Apollo Moon lander was the 33rd probe sent to the Moon? Spooky isn't it? At one point, and within three pages, Dr Michael Malin ("the most important man in the world where Mars is concerned") gets accused of conspiracy, then graciously understood, then snidely attacked again.

Things really go too far when Hancock drags in the old 'drip-feed the public information' conspiracy – *X-Files* and all. (Ironically, it would seem that Hancock himself is either a perpetrator or victim of this very operation – *Fingerprints of the Gods* apparently had its ETH chapter cut at the eleventh hour, but *The Mars Mystery* all but comes right out for interventionism.) Anyone who has even a cursory knowledge of the interrelationship between science fact and science fiction (eg the careers of Hermann Oberth and Harry Lange) knows that this is exactly what it is, a symbiotic duality – not a controlled conspiracy.

YOU GET SPECULATION ON THE 'LINE OF DICHOTOMY' AND 'LIFE' ON MARS, 'SACRED' GEOMETRY, AND A SMATTERING OF EGYPTOLOGY THROWN IN FOR GOOD MEASURE

Hancock assumes that if you pose all the difficult stuff as questions (and state an alternative to every controversial theory) then you can avoid being classified as a nut and get credit for having an open, adventurous mind.

Sadly, the opposite is true. I doubt that I'm the only one who would rather read someone who states a clearly defined position and then lets you engage with it. To put it another way, I'd rather read John Gribbin on asteroids and then put my feet up with a good David Icke conspiracy than be consistently infuriated by a book that exhibits all the signs of a serious identity crisis.

In stating that a truly radical, verifiable discovery on Mars might "change our entire world-view", Hancock unwittingly admits that this is really what he'd ultimately like to be known for.

And if all this should fail to impress the magnitude of such subject matter upon us, there's still the staggeringly silly amount of TNT and nuclear explosions that are bandied about as analogous to every asteroid and comet mentioned along the way – yes, Graham, we get the idea…

I'm not the only one to comment on the irony of Hollywood spending $170 million on millennial asteroid disaster movies while Western governments contribute their children's pocket money to a global early detection system. I propose that Clinton impose a one-off 'windfall-to-earth' tax on Dreamworks SKG and Touchstone – 10% of all profits to save the world; maybe our author could do the same.

For the time being, Hancock will continue to ride high on the crest of the asteroid/comet tsunami and everyone from Hollywood to Nestlé (with their strange ad campaign, eat a KitKat – get killed by an asteroid) will continue to exploit our fears until TNBA (The Next Big Apocalypse) comes along.

The bookshop poster boldly proclaims "Don't miss *The Mars Mystery* – your life may depend on it" – it might as well tell us to duck and cover. I suggest you spend your £16.99 on tins of beans and a shovel – or better yet, send it direct to this reviewer's favourite charity at Spaceguard UK, 35 Pownall Road, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8LX (http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/fr77/index.htm).

NIKLAS RASCHE

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EXECRABLE

ALL BOOK PICTURES : LISA ANDERS

THE POWER OF MIRACLES

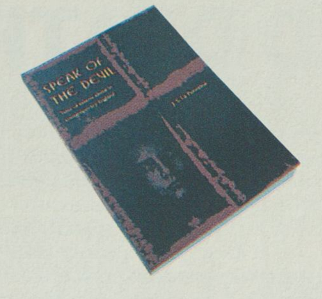
ROCHELLE M. GIBLER

Headline, 1998, hb, £18.99,pp246, appendices, index, photos. ISBN 0-7472-1921-4

◆

There was a time when you didn't encounter this sort of rot outside the vanity presses. 150 or so pages of horrid, banal pap, providing scant and anecdotal evidence for the phenomenon it purports to "examine", followed by 60 pages of evangelical Christian bilge – "The immediate danger of dispensing with God and with Christian ethics is the undermining of the central notion of morality..." and so on. Gibler is clearly profoundly ignorant of her subject; at one stage (p. 184), she claims that Uri Geller is a trance medium who claims to contact the spirits of the dead. Truly wretched.

JOE MCNALLY



SPEAK OF THE DEVIL
TALES OF SATANIC ABUSE IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLAND

JEAN S. LA FONTAINE

Cambridge University Press. 1998.
Pb £14.95 pp224, index, bib, notes.
ISBN 0-521-62934-9.

One of the hardest tasks facing any researcher into anomalous phenomena is to persuade (where the research justifies it) committed believers that their anxieties have no real basis. Although we can think of many examples in the genres of ufology, strange social panics and so on, one of the prime examples is the scare over 'satanic child abuse' that gripped Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The seeds of the belief that satanic 'covens' were kidnapping (or breeding) children for sacrifice arrived from North America (where it followed its own course) in the early 1980s and many of the 'outbreaks' were reported and discussed in *FT*. The main ones – at Nottingham, Orkney, Rochdale and Cleveland – horrified a nation faced with stories of monstrous depravity on the one hand and welfare workers making dawn raids to snatch children (deemed 'at risk') from people thought to be evil cultists on the other. The fact that these people were parents and had not been convicted of anything was equally disturbing. It seemed, at the height of the 'scare', that society was returning to the days of the witch persecutions in which a mere rumour or accusation was enough to convict a person and bring down the direst retribution.

The police were often accused of being part of the insidious cult when their investigations found no evidence of human sacrifice, child kidnappings or organised cultish activities. Matters were complicated by real events, such as the serial murders of young girls by the Wests or by real cases of multigenerational incest. The panic was felt most keenly by Christian fundamentalists and those working in health and welfare departments, as well as in the police and teaching, who were often prominent in spreading the anxiety to colleagues. Besides the real victims of child abuse, there were many attacks by fundamentalist groups upon others they identified as Satanists or pagans of any sort.

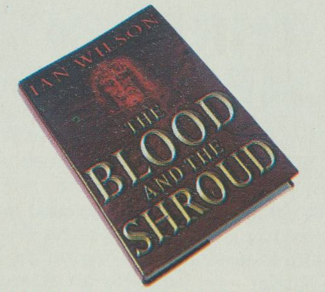
So concerned was the Department of Health that it funded a study by Jean La Fontaine, one of Britains leading anthropologists. Professor emeritus of social anthropology at the London School of Economics, Dr La Fontaine reported, officially, in 1994 that there was no independent corroboration of child abuse in acts of devil worship. Because of her interests, her experience, the extent of her inquiries and the wealth of data she gathered, many people felt there was more she could say on the subject… and this book is it.

Those of us who had the pleasure of hearing Dr La Fontaine speak at UnCon98 were impressed by her quiet erudition and her grandmotherly practicality. All of that is brought to bear on her obvious command of the subject as she sought an answer to the question of why – despite the lack of evidence – the belief in a satanic conspiracy lasted as long as it did and had such a terrible grip on its believers.

Here she analyses the origins of the scare, conceptions of evil, the real and imagined occult groups, the escalation of allegations and the nature of proof. She particularly concentrates on the role of the children, how their ideas developed in play and under questioning, and the so-called modern 'witchfinders'.

Speak of the Devil is, therefore, vital to understanding social panics of the kind that fascinate forteans. It is a wise and compassionate book – drawing on the author's own studies of genuine witchcraft cultures elsewhere in the world – full of pointers and insight, especially about the conflict between fundamentalism and social change – a subject we are bound to hear more of in these millennialist times. It also illuminates the process of how we perceive and interpret the anomalous (eg, we are told that the sinister Latin-like chant reported by children in one incident turned out to be the 'Do Re Me…' song from *The Sound of Music*). Highly recommended.

BOB RICKARD



THE BLOOD AND THE SHROUD

IAN WILSON

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1998, £20, pp333, illus, index, notes, ISBN0-297-84149-1

Following the age-old tradition of buses, you wait years for a book on the Turin Shroud and then three turn up at once. They do at least have the good grace to approach it from different angles. In *The Templar Revelation*, Picknett and Prince take 'the Templars did it' view, citing them as the traditional guardians of the cloth. Knight & Lomas follow a more masonic path (continuing their theme from *The Hiram Key*) in *The Second Messiah* and claim the image to be that of Joseph, brother of Jesus and the first bishop of Jerusalem.

If, however, you would prefer a straightforward evaluation of the facts and fallacies surrounding the Shroud, then turn to *The Blood and the Shroud.*

Wilson is a believer and fiercely proud of it. However, this does not prevent him dealing with each aspect of his investigations objectively and fully admitting that his answers to the many questions posed by the Shroud are simply plausible suggestions.

Dividing the issues into four sections, Wilson considers the main points of the Shroud's authenticity or otherwise in a supremely logical fashion.

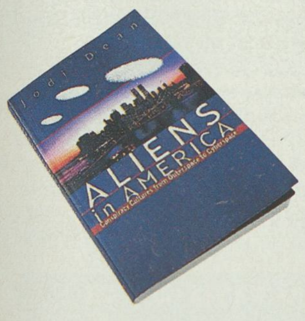
He first considers the Shroud simply as an image (is it a fair representation of a crucified body? etc.), then as a physical object (the fabric, the composition of the 'bloodstains', the surface debris, etc).

Attempting to trace the Shroud back through history, Wilson takes various landmarks as starting points, such as the disappearance of the Shroud in 1204 and the possible (and often tenuous) links with Constantinople's Edessa cloth.

He then tackles the real thorn in the side of most 'Shroudies', 1988's DNA tests. Wilson's treatment of this is again objective, considering the arguments arising from each standpoint while pointing out the advantages and failings of the test process used. He particularly concentrates on whether the Shroud could show someone specially crucified for the purpose in the Middle Ages.

In the end, as you would expect, Wilson largely comes down on the side of authenticity. However, the entire book provokes argument and discussion both for and against each theory and the end is not so much a conclusion as an open invitation to make up one's own mind. Probably one of the most comprehensive and sensible books written on the subject.

CHRIS WOOD



ALIENS IN AMERICA
CONSPIRACY CULTURES FROM OUTER SPACE TO CYBERSPACE

JODIE DEAN

Cornell University Press, Ithica and London, 1998, pb $15.95, pp242, illus, notes, index.
ISBN 0-8014-8468-5.

Aliens in America is more humorous than critical social theory is supposed to be. Any book which reveals in the first few pages that Robert Dean (no relation) sued his employer for discriminating against him because of his UFO beliefs and won is worth an hour of anyone's time.

The author argues that the American public is caught between, on one hand, a deluge of raw data, SFX and conflicting expert testimonies and, on the other, a televisual agora which renders political choices and decisions 'virtually meaningless, practically impossible'.

The result is paralysis and paranoia, with conspiracy theory standing in for politics. The UFO is the site and icon for these postmodern disquiets.

Dean traces the Cold War origins of the UFO discourse and suggests that the abductee is as emblematic of the government's inability to protect its citizenry as the astronaut was of Cold War domestic political consensus.

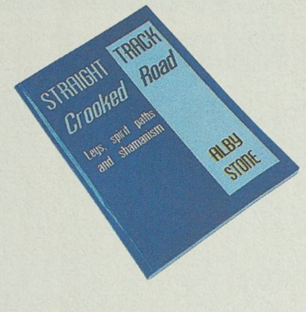
Dean bases her view that aliens are no longer on the fringe, though still 'of the fringe' (whaaa?), on pretty ropey statistics culled from Phil Cousineau (for every fundamentalist Christian there are five UFO believers – be very afraid) and Budd Hopkins.

On the other hand, her unwillingness to privilege (as we pomo types like to say) any viewpoint leads to the inclusion of some deliriously batty quotes. John Mack, for instance, rails that "the patronizing, cynical attitude of some media shows […] constitutes a human rights violation of an authentic minority."

What I find more worrying is a lack of clarity about where reported speech ends and authorial comment begins: was it Katherina Wilson or Jodi Dean, for example, who thought that "argument is futile [..] because democracy can bring about Holocaust"?

Great fun and loads of cheering quotes from abductees.

VAL STEVENSON



STRAIGHT PATH, CROOKED ROAD: LEYS, SPIRIT PATHS AND SHAMANISM

ALBY STONE

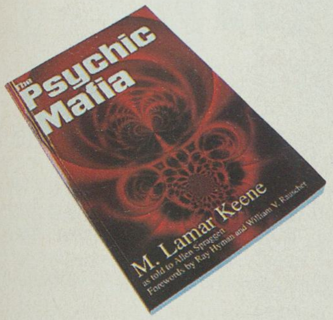
Heart of Albion Press, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough LE12 6UJ, 1998, pb, pp90, illus, notes, biblio, index.
ISBN 1-872883-50-8

As more and more of the ideas of the original earth mysteries researchers are sucked into the mainstream a quiet revolution has been going on.

In this book, Stone launches an attack on perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the EM scene: leys themselves. Stone argues that they have no place in a serious study of geomancy. Using a staggering array of archæological and anthropological knowledge, he suggests that the whole concept of spirit lines (and possibly the notion of shamanism itself) should not be seen as part of any western European mystical tradition.

This is not, it must be said, a book for the amateur leyhunter – or, ultimately, any ley-hunter. Recommended.

JOE MCNALLY



THE PSYCHIC MAFIA

M. LAMAR KEENE ("AS TOLD TO ALLEN SPRAGGETT")

Prometheus Books, New York, 1997, pp177, photos, references.
ISBN 1-57392-161-0

There is, as all good forteans know, no fanatic like a convert. Keene, once an American medium of some note, here spills the beans on the tricks of the Spiritualism game with an almost unhealthy glee. Positively revelling in the contempt with which he and his fellow mediums (media?) regarded their – usually wealthy, but not for long – marks, he delivers a dazzling and hilarious exposé of just how morally bankrupt many practising mediums are. It should be noted that few of them seem to be in peril of monetary bankruptcy.

The whole degraded business probably reaches its nadir in Keene's claim that mediums have been known to raid the houses of recently-dead clients in search of information which might help them further defraud the next generation of grieving victims – or even cash and valuables; the section where a mob-handed raid on the home of a deceased client drips with the blackest of gallows humour.

We shall draw an impenetrable veil over the nightmare visions conjured up by the chapter on "spirit sex", especially when considered in tandem with the photographs of some of Keene's fellow practitioners.

For years, those of us with an interest in Spiritualism as a social phenomenon have had to make do with tantalising summaries of and allusions to Keene's book, usually accompanied by a lament about its unavailability; Prometheus are to be heartily congratulated for bringing it back into print. An index would have been nice, though.

JOE MCNALLLY

PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHAMBERMAID AND OTHER SILLY SIGNS

JOHN JEROME

Michael O'Mara Books, London, 1997, pb £3.99, pp128, ISBN 1-85479-316-0.

A suitable book for the lavatory. "Ladies may have a fit upstairs" (Hong Kong tailor shop); "Why not rent out a movie for a dull evening?"; "Our wines leave you nothing to hope for"; "We highly recommend the hotel tart"; and so on.

THE ONE HUNDRED STUPIDEST THINGS EVER DONE

ROSS AND KATHRYN PETRAS

Michael O'Mara Books, London, 197, pb £3.99, pp128, ISBN 1-85479-242-3.

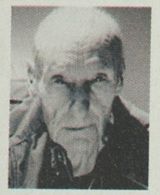
You know the kind of thing: useless inventions, lunatic laws, daft crooks, and undefined dimness. A bit like a *Fortean Times* Christmas filler, but sadly without source references.

PAUL SIEVEKING

MULTIMEDIA

COMING SOON

The Lux Centre is screening *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (Joshua Oppenheimer) on 31 July at 7pm. A bizarre pseudo-documentary about alien impregnation/virgin birth, it features clips from classic B-movies interspersed with a rag-tag bunch of odd American folk nattering on about aliens. The movie will be introduced by the director and be preceded by a new collaboration with Christine Cynn *Music To Watch Girls By*.



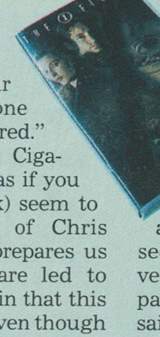
On an equally psychedelic note, the Lux will also be hosting a season devoted to William Burroughs between 18 July and 13 August. Highlights include *Naked Making Lunch: The Uncut Version* (Chris Rodley), *Chappaqua* (Conrad Rooks), *Burroughs: The Movie* (Howard Brookner) and Klaus Maek's 1992 revealing Burrough's interview *William Burroughs: Commissioner of Sewers*. The whole season rounds off with *Outside Looking In* (Timothy Leary/EZTV), an experimental journey into Timothy Leary's own cyberspace.

The Lux Centre
2-4 Hoxton Square
Call 0171 684 0201
for more details.

VIDEO

X-FILES: FILE 12 – THE END

1998. Cert 15. 90 min. £14.99. Dir: Bob Goodwin. Stars: David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson, Mimi Rogers



It's all a game. You just take their pieces one by one until the board is cleared." These words by the Cigarette Smoking Man (as if you doubted he'd be back) seem to be the game plan of Chris Carter's story as he prepares us for the movie. We are led to believe again and again that this is indeed "The End" even though we know it is just a new beginning.

After five years, we are left asking what more can we know and will anything actually happen in this episode. Once again, the answers are almost everything and almost nothing – business as usual. But in *The X-Files* nothing much is usually wrapped in an interesting package. While there is a distinct feeling of loose ends being brought together and of marking everyone's role prior to jumping off to the real story, there is still enough to engage the attention. This being an odd year, Carter leaves the partners, once again so close to the truth, shell shocked and facing reassignment (in even years Mulder 'dies').

Agent Diana Fowler (played with warmth and understatement by Mimi Rogers), a previous girlfriend of Mulder and supporter and believer in the X-Files, seems to be there only as a vehicle to examine and strain the partnership/relationship. That said, in her few scenes she manages to invest the character with enough sympathy to make her return in season 6 welcome. Her scenes with Duchovny are filled with the sense that these two actually do have a back story in contrast to previous attempts ('Fire' being the most disastrous example), although a cynic might observe that this may well be because she and Duchovny actually do have a history.

As always, there are many moments of humour. Frohicke getting ready for bed in kevlar vest and pyjamas. The CSM's utter contempt for the Consortium members. At the beginning of the episode a post-it note reads "You are here" on the UFO of the trademark poster and we have a quick tour of past cases in the pictures on the office wall marking a subtle farewell to the Vancouver settings (I for one will miss the basement office) and episodes.

The End is the X-Files at its depressing best. I hope Mulder and Scully's journey to the big screen is a little more pleasant. But somehow I doubt it…

JANE WATKINS

COMPETITION 58

FILE 12 – THE END

What are the names of the Lone Gunmen?

There are copies of **The End** for the first five people to respond to the X on our window. One entry per person only, to reach us by 30 September, to the address on page 60.

MOVIE

GODZILLA

Dir: Roland Emmerich. Stars: Metthew Broderick, Jean Reno, Maria Pitillo,Hank Azaria. 140 min. Cert PG

After 18 months of the sort of hype usually reserved for religious phenomena, Godzilla could only have been a disappointment. Surprisingly though, it's not that bad, just deeply average. Lurking behind the arrogant marketing campaign is a bloated, insecure B-movie that lacks the charm, effectiveness or imagination of its comparatively more micro-budgeted predecessors.

Devlin and Emmerich again prove their skills at demolition, but plotting, pacing and sustaining the audience's interest between bangs still appear to be beyond them. At least a third of the film is spent on inept exposition that has you idly twiddling your thumbs waiting for something to happen, and almost two and a half hours of repetitive action sequences leave you feeling like you've stumbled into a double bill of the film and its sequel.

But this film is about Godzilla and, quite frankly, he/she/it kicks monster butt. A giant iguana with knobs on, the beast looks bland and unimpressive in stills, but once in action it's a wonder to behold. It's just a shame it isn't given much to do, as its few acting scenes are far more successful than those of co-stars Matthew Broderick or Maria Pitillo.

Mechanical and curiously unaffecting, Godzilla will only be of interest to hardcore monster fans, SFX trainspotters and budding cryptozoologists. See you all for the sequel then. Godzilla vs Q The Winged Serpent anyone?

MARK PILKINGTON

MOVIE

TOUCH (1998)

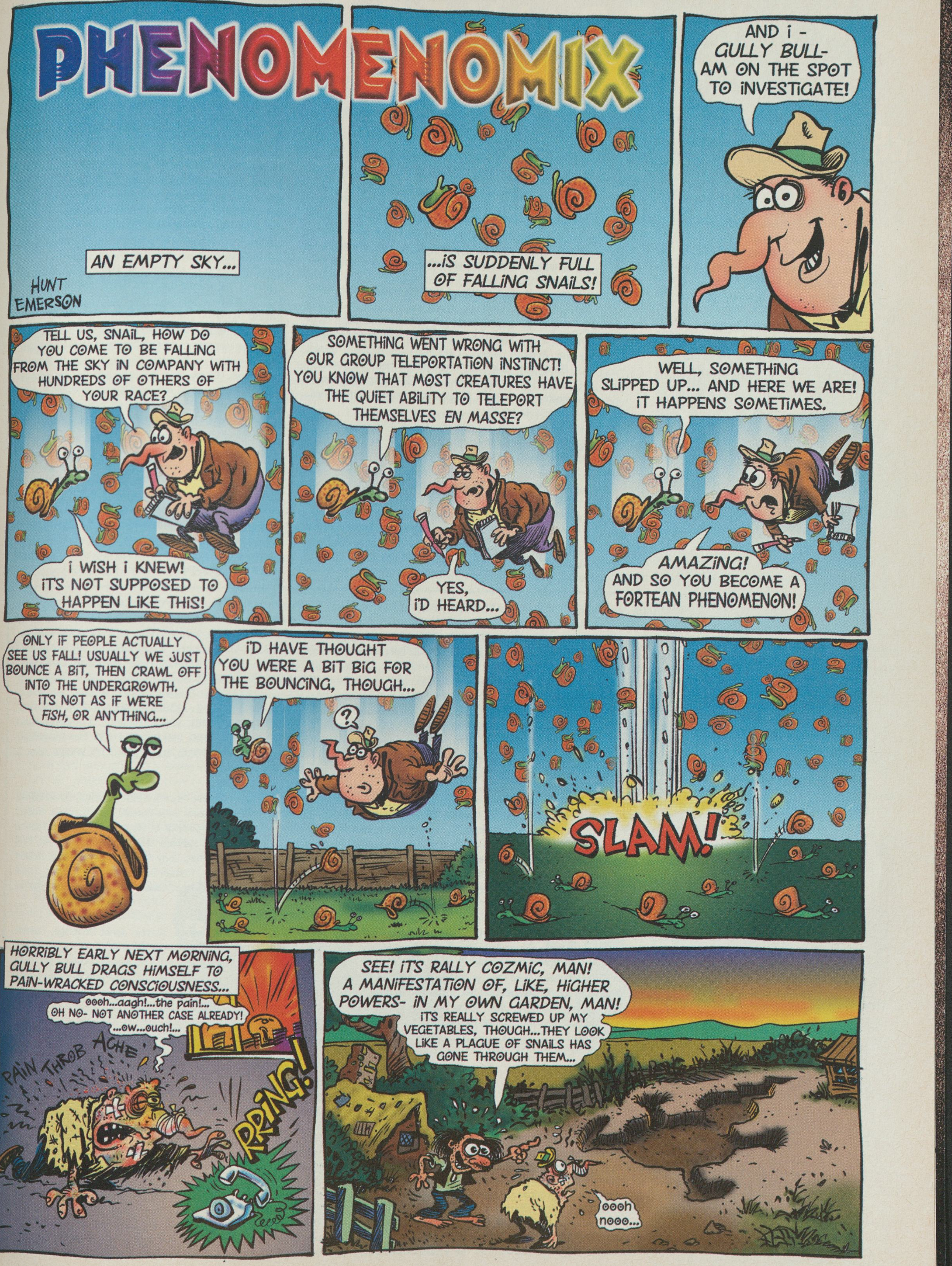
Dir: Paul Schrader. Stars: Bridget Fonda, Skeet Ulrich, Christopher Walken, Tom Arnold. 97 min. Cert 15

Intelligent films dealing with paranormal phenomena have always been a bit thin on the ground. Most entries in the field tend to one extreme or another – the pea-soup sensationalism of *The Exorcist* and company, or the cotton-candy insubstantiality of *Phenomena* and its vile ilk.

Touch, then, comes as a most pleasant suprise – thoughtful, unsensational, quietly paced and complex. This is hardly unexpected, given its pedigree; adapted, perhaps surprisingly, from an Elmore Leonard novel, and scripted and directed by cinema legend Schrader, the man behind many all-time classic films, from *Taxi Driver* to *Mishima*.

It raises many more questions than it answers, and when was the last time you could honestly say that about a film? All in all, a pleasing, cerebral film which addresses its paranormal content with an admirably fortean attitude.

JOE MCNALLY


PHENOMENOMIX
AN EMPTY SKY...
HUNT EMERSON
...iS SUDDENLY FULL OF FALLiNG SNAiLS!
AND i - GULLY BULL- AM ON THE SPOT TO iNVESTiGATE!
TELL US, SNAiL, HOW DO YOU COME TO BE FALLiNG FROM THE SKY iN COMPANY WiTH HUNDREDS OF OTHERS OF YOUR RACE?
i WiSH i KNEW! iT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN LiKE THiS!
SOMETHiNG WENT WRONG WiTH OUR GROUP TELEPORTATiON iNSTiNCT! YOU KNOW THAT MOST CREATURES HAVE THE QUiET ABiLiTY TO TELEPORT THEMSELVES EN MASSE?
YES, i'D HEARD...
WELL, SOMETHiNG SLiPPED UP... AND HERE WE ARE! iT HAPPENS SOMETiMES.
AMAZiNG! AND SO YOU BECOME A FORTEAN PHENOMENON!
ONLY iF PEOPLE ACTUALLY SEE US FALL! USUALLY WE JUST BOUNCE A BiT, THEN CRAWL OFF iNTO THE UNDERGROWTH. iTS NOT AS iF WE'RE FiSH, OR ANYTHiNG...
i'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU WERE A BiT BiG FOR THE BOUNCiNG, THOUGH...
?
SLAM!
HORRiBLY EARLY NEXT MORNiNG, GULLY BULL DRAGS HiMSELF TO PAiN-WRACKED CONSCiOUSNESS...
oooh...aagh!...the pain!... OH NO- NOT ANOTHER CASE ALREADY! ...ow...ouch!...
PAiN THROB ACHE
RRiNG!
SEE! iT'S RALLY COZMiC, MAN! A MANiFESTATiON OF, LiKE, HiGHER POWERS- iN MY OWN GARDEN, MAN!
iT'S REALLY SCREWED UP MY VEGETABLES, THOUGH...THEY LOOK LiKE A PLAGUE OF SNAiLS HAS GONE THROUGH THEM...
oooh nooo...

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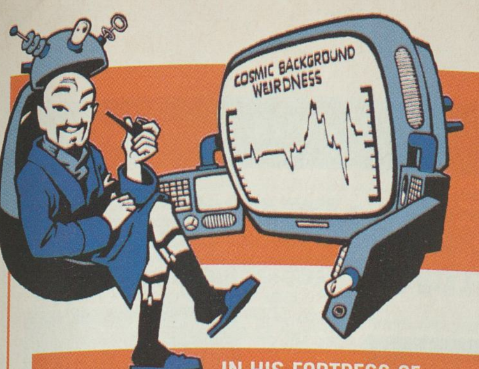
CHARLES HOY FORT (1874–1932)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort. Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932). His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had ideas of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. He coined the term 'teleportation' and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."



THE HIEROPHANT

IN HIS FORTRESS OF ARROGANCE, DEEP BELOW THE HIMALAYAS, THE IMMORTAL ASCENDED MASTER KNOWN AS THE HIEROPHANT TRAVELS THE MORE DISREPUTABLE PATHS OF FORTEANA

Some sort of award for timeliness is probably due to the good people at Piatkus books. Less than two weeks after the latest NASA surveys showed, to the satisfaction of all but a rapidly-dwindling body of fanatics, that the so-called "Mars face" was nothing but a mountain, up the accursed simulacrum pops again, on the front of an impressive glossy publicity leaflet for the forthcoming *Martian Genesis*. "Could this be the face of your remotest ancestor?" asks a caption. "No" would seem to be the obvious answer, but the enclosed book seems to run to significantly more than one word. Author Herbie Brennan has an impressive history, with "more than sixty works of fact and fiction" to his name – the Hierophant will be eternally grateful to anyone who can name one. And how will Brennan react to the publisher's comparison of his work with that of "Eric von Danniken" – possibly a distant relative of Erich von Däniken?

Could this soon replace the first cuckoo of spring? The first crop circle of the year was reported at Silbury Hill in early May, a 250ft (76m) pattern of concentric rings, no doubt soon to be dubbed the Star Glyph or some such. (Curiously, *Fortean Times* ' Associate Publisher John Innes was staying just up the road at the time...) Farmer David Hues, who owns the field picked by the Space Brothers for their latest Tifinag missive, is not impressed: "This may have been funny a few years ago when the first one appeared, but now farmers have had enough." It's always the same with paranormal phenomena – they're so cute when they first turn up, but after a few years the charm goes, they start making a mess, and before you know it it's time to have them humanely put down...

New Agers have probably been feeling a little left out lately, what with all the miraculous signs currently clustering like flies round the world's proper religions. Among all the fruit-based hieratic communications, there has to date been nary a hint of a dolphin, crystal or dreamcatcher – until now. The Beta Israel Temple in Los Angeles has claimed that their treasured signed portrait of actress and New Age harbinger Shirley MacLaine has begun to weep. The portrait was presented by MacLaine to one Dr Ernesto A Moshe Montgomery, and began to weep some time in early May. It is currently on display in the Temple, near some candles and a picture of an angel. The Temple's press release, a document with a prose style entirely its own, tells us that Dr Montgomery – "a British Jamaican Futurist and Seer", apparently – "while flying at 30,000 feet accompanied by Shirley MacLaine in her private jet, picked up the vibration and relayed it to her that before the year 2000, she will be a catalyst in bringing peace to mankind throughout the world." Which gives her about 18 months, by my reckoning – the Hierophant will naturally be keeping you up to date with developments as they happen, or even as they don't.

There was widespread apprehension during the recent Whitbread yacht race when it was learned that one leg would take racers through the dreaded Bermuda Triangle. Imagine the ships' pilots horror when they discovered that, on completing the leg, that not only had nobody vanished, but not one ship's compass had gone crazy as the surrounding ocean was engulfed in an eerie green glow while inexplicable lights chased each other around the rigging, leading to a tragic shipwreck followed by several years of following Roddy McDowall around to no particular end. Where, as a great poet once came very close to saying, are the phenomena of yesteryear? Oh well, there's always next time.

IF YOU HAVE A LEAD ON ANY PARANORMAL GOSSIP, SHARE IT WITH THE HIEROPHANT
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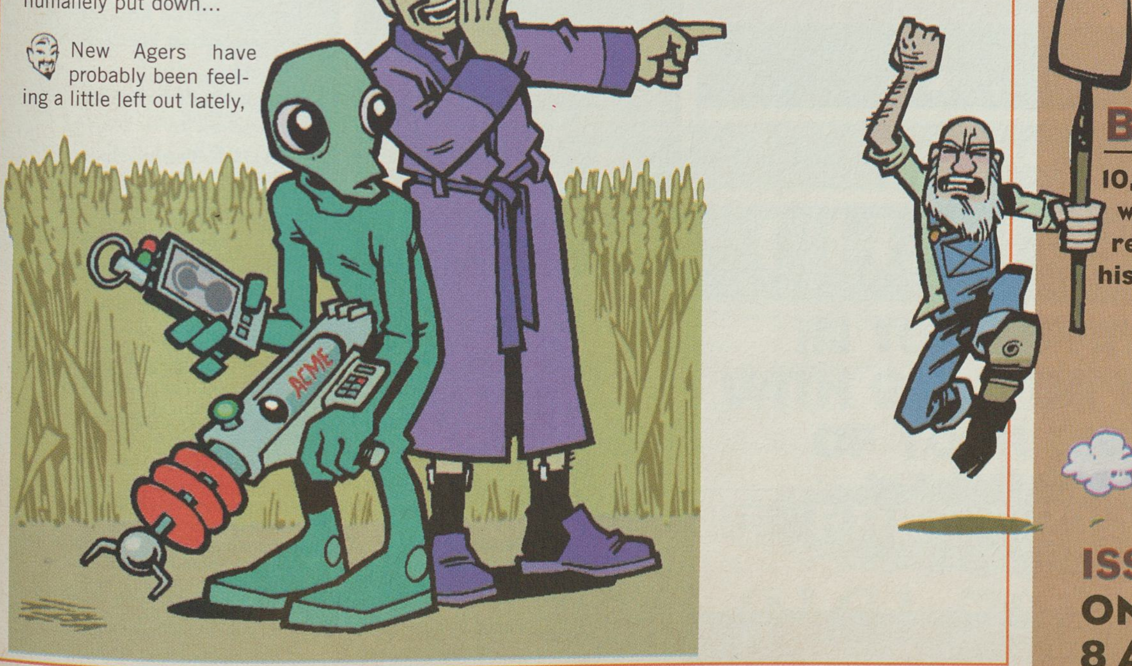

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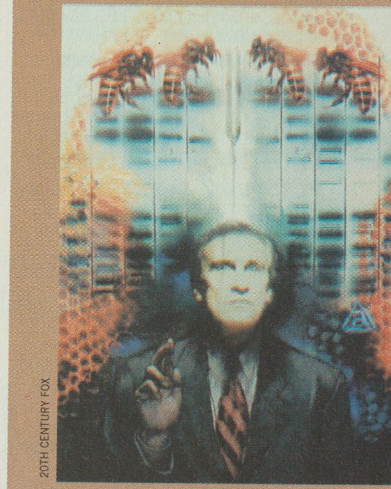
COMING SOON IN
forteantimes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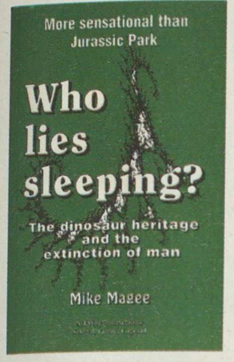
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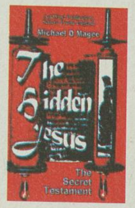

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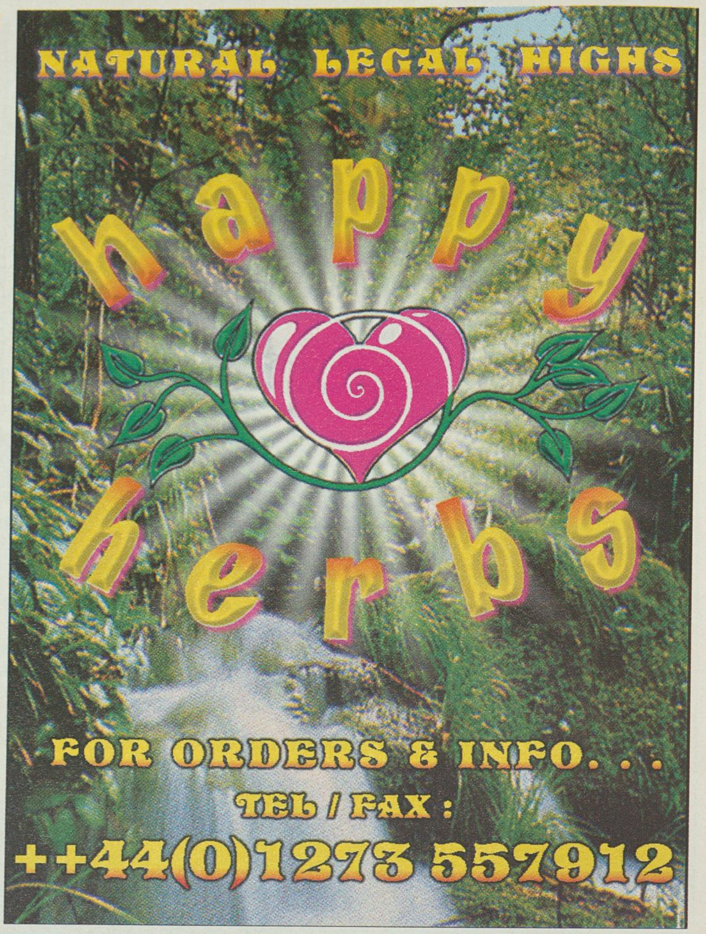

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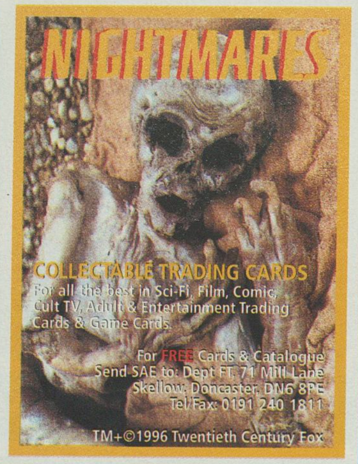

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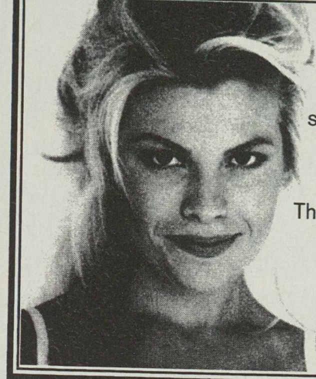

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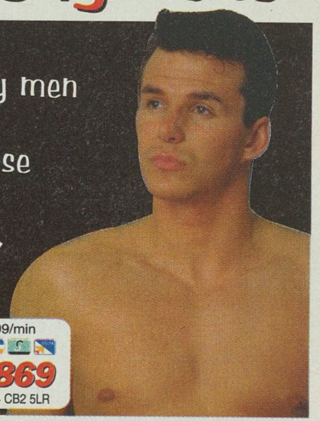

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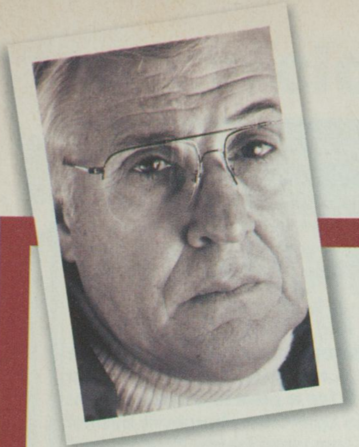
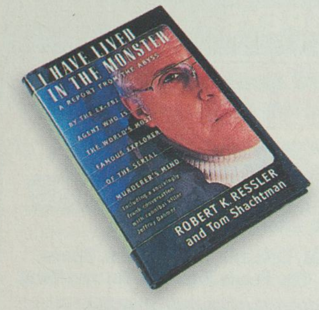


ROBERT RESSLER

Robert Ressler is widely credited with the invention of psychological profiling of criminals by the FBI. He has been a consultant on many TV programmes and movies such as *Silence of the Lambs* while his experiences have been used by authors such as Patricia Cornwell and Thomas Harris and as the basis for the character of Frank Black in *Millennium*. He talks about them here to **Jane Watkins**.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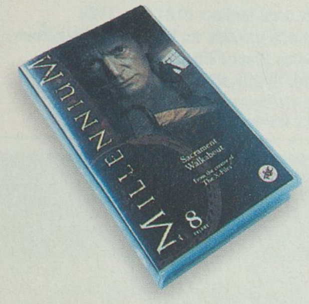
ROBERT K. RESSLER and Tom Shachtman


MILLENNIUM
8

Do you believe in evil?

Yes, definitely. I have worked on homicide cases for four decades now and have interviewed some of the most violent offenders known. Some acts can only be explained as evil and go far beyond the act of murder.

Some of the killers I have interviewed have attempted to allege an occult influence; for example, David Berkowitz's claims to have been involved with a satanic cult at the time of his crimes. They try to claim that "the Devil made me do it" but I've never found any evidence to support this. Often the media pick up on this aspect and create an atmosphere where people are no longer interested in the facts but in more stories which reinforce the panic. While the cases of alleged satanic child abuse are the best example of these, the recent spate of school shootings provides another case in point. One reporter writes that alleged satanic materials were found and this idea snowballs despite the fact that these materials amount to no more than a few Anne Rice novels!

As far as the question of whether or not one is born evil, I think it starts when a person is small. The influences and circumstances in their lives lead them to delve deeper into dark acts. Ironically, the criminals themselves lose a concept of evil. They rationalise their acts, painting themselves in terms of ridding society of what they deem to be "worthless people". After a point they are unable to prevent themselves from continuing to commit these acts. These individuals cannot be rehabilitated and so should be confined for life and we should study them to gain insight into their behaviour.

Part of the work of the Behavioural Sciences Unit of the FBI is to interview convicted killers so that we can better understand the unique way that their minds work. The priorities of these people and the way in which they go about their crimes reflect different impulses from those we might expect. This information assists us in creating the psychological profiles which the BSU provides to help investigators. It's still good old-fashioned police work that catches the criminals, unlike in fiction!

The rise in child and teen killing is truly an alarming trend. Homicide is now highest among 15-19 year-olds. There is always a high copycat factor with spectacular crimes. Young people have no real formed personality of their own and they look to others to emulate. Many have no positive role models and so they look to fiction. They identify with the anti-hero on the outside of the society that has rejected them and absorb the negative view of life they afford.

What are the cultural effects of fictionalising so many cases (or even the increase in 'true-life' crime TV)? Does it take that much more to get our attention?

There are only a limited number of ideas out there so at some point there will be commonalities with real cases. However, the truth is by far stranger than fiction.

There is a certain amount of competition to be the #1 serial killer and the media plays up to this. Some killers, such as David Berkowitz, try to foster a relationship with individual journalists to bring their actions forward – "catch me if you can" – and derive pleasure from manipulating the coverage of their actions. After they have been jailed, killers will still try to manipulate the press to relieve the boredom of their situation – David Berkowitz's continued claims of an occult background to his case are a good example of this.

How do you feel about the portrayal of the serial killer as 'hero'?

People are titillated by multiple murder. I have personally encountered people who become fascinated with them, corresponding with killers in jail and even marrying them. In fiction the audience can be manipulated to pull for the killer – for example, he may be presented as more intelligent and charismatic, such a Hannibal Lecter, or he may kill someone the audience dislikes such as the tabloid reporter in *Red Dragon*. Many multiple murderers are very charismatic themselves and may be skilled manipulators.

How do you feel about the various 'portrayals' of yourself and the linking of your real activities with the fictional ones of say Frank Black?

I take it as a compliment. I didn't get into this for the fame, but it's nice to have the department's achievements recognised.

One of the first authors to contact us was Thomas Harris who painted a darker picture of our work. I think *Millennium* represents more of a return to that gritty realism. On leaving the FBI, Frank Black finds himself unable to do anything else – I can certainly identify with that. However, I like to hope that I have a better sense of humour and a better ability to keep my life in balance than he does!

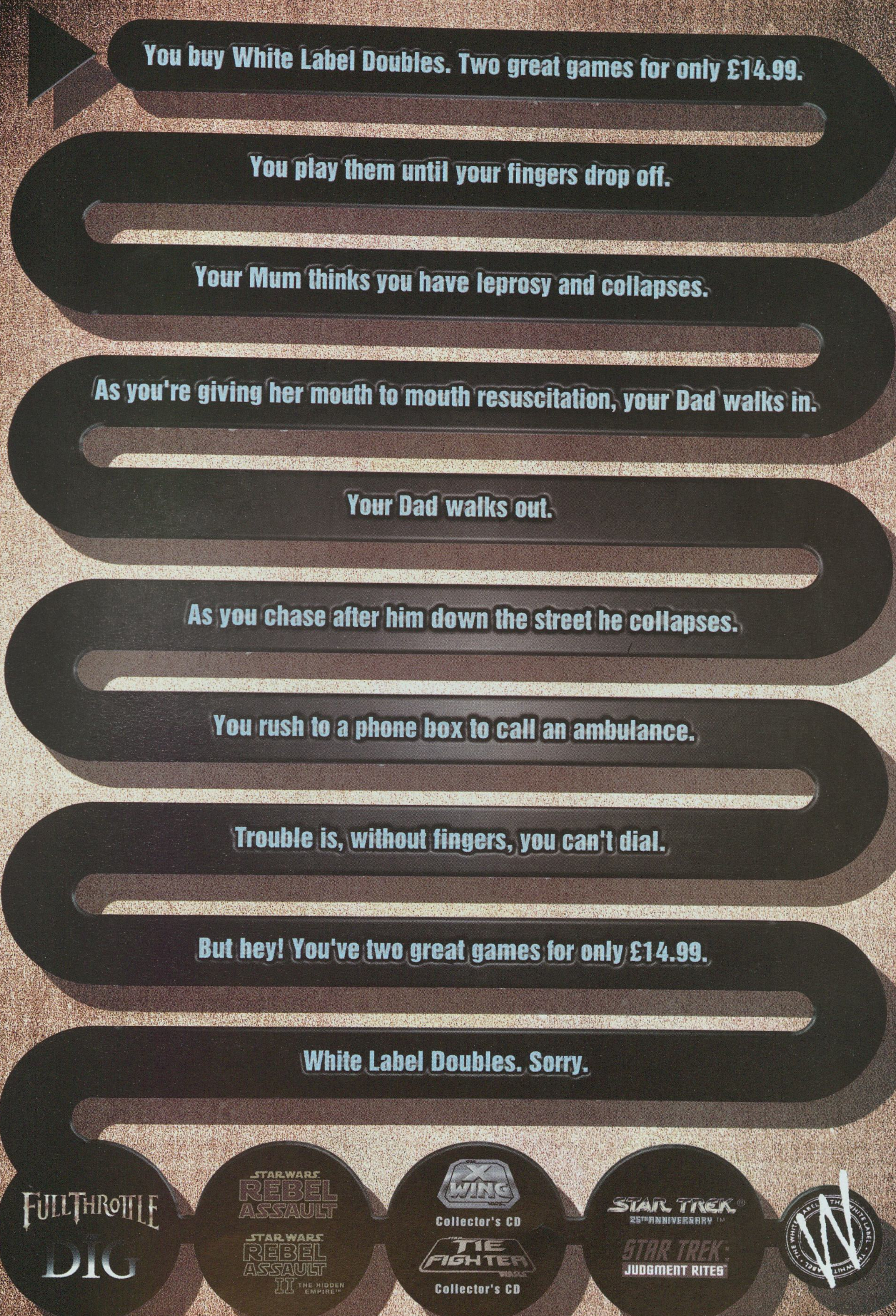
Chris Carter has said that he based the Millennium Group on the Academy group, which is a small consulting firm of people who used to work for the FBI. Having seen the pilot, we were very impressed with what he had done so we made contact with him and now consult on the show.

COMPETITION 59

QUESTION

Which actor portrays Frank Black in the series *Millennium*?

There are copies of Robert Ressler's book I HAVE LIVED IN THE MONSTER and MILLENNIUM VOLUMES 7 AND 8 for the first five correct entries to reach us at the competition address printed on page 60 by 30 September 1998.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